

**From Renaissance to Postmodern  
at the Institute of English and American Studies**

Prizewinning essays from the OTDK  
2007-2011

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# **From Renaissance to Postmodern at the Institute of English and American Studies**

**Prizewinning essays from the OTDK  
2007-2011**

■ SZEGEDI TUDOMÁNYEGYETEM  
■ UNIVERSITY OF SZEGED

*1581 • 1921 • 2000*



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# Introduction

This compilation presents a selection of prizewinning essays written by IEAS students for the OTDK (National Scholarly Students' Circle) between 2005 and 2011. One can claim that essays like these represent the best of the creative production of knowledge at IEAS on the student level, as has been confirmed by the national competition. It is well worth having a look at them for several reasons. First and foremost, these texts stand out as successful academic projects on student level with well-defined topics and methodologies. Secondly, they are also informative as to the areas of study that are available and popular at our Institute. Last but not least, the formal requirements (Style Sheet) the Institute sets for seminar and other papers can be observed in use as we read them.

The OTDK is a national competition organized for students active in Hungarian higher education. The competition takes place on two levels, the local and the national within the time frame of two years. First, any active student of a department can register for the local readings with an essay in the Fall semester. The essay has to be about the size of a BA paper, and it is presented in two ways, in writing and orally. To begin with, two copies are handed in, and two readers assess the written work, each giving a maximum of 30 points divided into 5 aspects (project, argumentation, use of materials and novelty, format, language).

The readers also attach a detailed commentary of the academic merits of the paper to their assessments. Then, the competitor is asked to present a 15 minute version of the essay orally for a committee of three faculty members who specialize in the area but have not been involved in the assessment before. The committee can give max. 30 points for the presentation (based on its structure, logic, use of time, response to criticism).

Eventually, the sum of the points will determine the place the paper got in the local competition. The committee also sets the limit for the national round when it determines the number of points necessary for an enrollment in the competition on the national level. For example, it may declare that out of the attainable 90, a minimum of 65 is needed for the national competition, but this limit may change from year to year. This round is called the TDK. Next year or in the Spring of the same year, an improved version of the same paper is registered and is assessed in the very same way it has been processed at the home institution. The difference from the TDK, however, is significant: for one, the other competitors come from all over Hungary, i. e. there are many of them and they are all of good quality, second, the readers come from all over the universities in Hungary, so the new assessments may be profoundly

different from the ones the paper received at home. The points attained will determine the position of the paper in the national competition of students. This round is called the OTDK.

The papers selected for this volume have all won prizes at the OTDK at three subsequent occasions between 2007-11. They have been presented either in English or Hungarian but they have all been written in English as they all started as seminar papers or BAT papers written for the Institute where the language of instruction is English. It is important to note that not all prizewinning essays are printed here: all students had been contacted but eight pieces were sent in and selected eventually. There are diverse reasons for this: most of the essays not printed here have been published elsewhere, but some former students already pursue different interest or did not have the motivation for publication. For this reason, it is vital to include the full list of prizewinning essays only a selection of which is being published here.

Table 1. OTDK prizes by IEAS students since 2005

|    | Name             | Year | Session   | supervisor            | Prize             |
|----|------------------|------|---|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. | László, Zsuzsa   | 2005 | 19-20 <sup>th</sup> c English poetry, drama, arts | Kiss, Attila          | 2.                |
| 2. | Lipták, Dániel   | 2005 | Medieval and Renaissance English literature       | Nagy, Gergely         | 2                 |
| 3. | Koller, Nóra     | 2005 | American literature and culture                   | Barát, Erzsébet       | 1                 |
| 4. | Maczelka, Csaba  | 2007 | English and American poetry                       | Szőnyi, György E.     | 2                 |
| 5. | Kaposvári, Márk  | 2007 | English and American prose                        | Kiss, Attila          | 2                 |
| 6. | Borthaiser, Nóra | 2007 | English and American drama and film               | Cristian, Réka Mónika | 2                 |
| 7. | Fábricz, Katalin | 2007 | English and American drama and film               | Szőnyi, György E.     | 2                 |
| 8. | Kovács, László   | 2007 | English and American drama and film               | Kiss, Attila          | honorable mention |



|     |                       |      |                                     |                         |   |
|-----|-----------------------|------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| 9.  | Kocsis, Ferenc        | 2007 | Literary theory                     | Bocsor, Péter           | 3 |
| 10. | Nagy, Judit           | 2007 | Applied linguistics                 | Szabó-Gillinger, Eszter | 2 |
| 11. | Hajdú, Richárd        | 2009 | Drama and visual culture in English | Dragon, Zoltán          | 1 |
| 12. | Hausz, Frigyes        | 2009 | History                             | Péter, Róbert           | 2 |
| 13. | Kocsis, Ferenc        | 2009 | Literary theory                     | Bocsor, Péter           | 2 |
| 14. | Prohászka, Géza       | 2009 | World history after 1945            | Péter, Róbert           | 1 |
| 15. | Gyöngyösi, Nikolett   | 2011 | The English novel after 1945        | Kérchy, Anna            | 2 |
| 16. | Makai, Péter          | 2011 | Comparative literature              | Nagy, Gergely           | 2 |
| 17. | Pintér, Petra Orsolya | 2011 | Applied literature                  | Bukta, Katalin          | 2 |

The titles mirror key research interests at the Institute. To my mind, they are also informative about the cultural epochs currently popular among students.

The structure of the volume simulates the two major cultural epochs interrogated by the papers: the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries and the 20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> centuries. Within these, you can find fields of study as diverse as Renaissance Studies, Gender Studies, Drama Studies, Film Studies, History, Literary theory, Applied linguistics. It would have been difficult to envision an order of the different fields, so the chronological groups seemed the easiest way to arrange the texts. The authors have been asked to revise and shorten their papers for the sake of this publication, but these shortened versions reflect the interests and arguments of the original. The format of the papers is aligned to the Style Sheet of the Institute, all preferring the Reference format optional there. The essays have undergone some light editing, too, yet the overall aim of the editing work was to present genuine scholarly work by students as it came into being in the course of the TDK process.

Eventually, let me add a few words about the TDK as a form of instruction. TDK papers do not come into being for the sake of the competition. They form part of the educational process initially, but the TDK can enhance the

quality of the original project to a high degree. TDK papers are mostly ready by the time the competition is announced in the form of an excellent seminar paper or BA thesis. In other words, at least half a year or a year has been spent on the project before the local readings start. The students contact their supervisors whether the existing paper needs to be improved and if yes, how before handing in their first version for the TDK. When the oral presentation is made, some changes can be implemented, mostly according to the criticism in the written commentaries. The written commentaries reflect new insight into the topic, because at this point research leaves the scope of the student and the supervisor nexus and is assessed from an outside perspective. Then, the paper sent for the OTDK will be a revised version based on previous commentaries and the questions formulated by members of the Committee. On the OTDK level, reflection goes on, again in the form of two (brand new) commentaries and the discussion. If you think of this process, it represents a series of input-feedback relations that all serve to improve the project and the paper. This process is also present at the heart of seminar work and is reflected in the way BA or MA papers are evaluated. Yet, in the case of seminar papers and theses, the pieces produced and commented on close down a class or a stage of study and the process consists of two stages only: paper and commentary, or in more general terms statement and question. In the TDK process however, this relation is repeated several times: before the TDK, during it, before OTDK, during it, and even after the OTDK, when the paper, ideally, is transformed into an MA thesis (or a publication of some sort) after about two years of work in progress. Therefore it seems just to say that a student who gets involved in the TDK process is likely to get the best of the educational competence provided by institutions of higher education. Papers included in this volume represent the results of this educative process.

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# **PART 1**



# Love's Labour's Won?

## A Study on the relationship of William Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*



**Katalin Fábricz**

English and American Drama and Film section, 2<sup>nd</sup> prize (shared), 2007

### **Abstract**

In my paper I examine the close relationship between Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. I intend to show that these two comedies are more than just similar to each other and that their relation needs to be described. After presenting the critics' notes on the similarities, I will deal with resemblance between them concerning the female characters, the same imageries built around them and the correspondence of traditions. In this essay I check five possible interpretations to describe the relationship between the two plays. Anatomizing the relationship between these two comedies, I will highlight the possible role a lost drama called *Love's Labour's Won* could have played.

### **Keywords**

Shakespeare, *Love's Labour's Won*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, similarities, relation analysis, female characters

## **I. Introduction**

In this paper I will investigate and attempt to identify the relationship between two Shakespearean comedies: *Love's Labour's Lost* and *A Midsummer*

*Night's Dream*. The topic is feasible due to a vast amount of critics who deal with either of these comedies, most mention the other drama as well. More specifically, I will exhibit what critics like Anne Barton, Blaze O. Bonazza, Harold F. Brooks, Géher István, Kéry László, Jan Kott, Mészöly Deszö, E. M. Tillyard and Robert Ornstein mention in connection with the similarities.

After regarding what has been stated in connection with the two plays by the critics, I provide my additional observations of the similarities that are echoed in both dramas, like the comic conventions and rites they share, whose significance lie in the fact that together they form a lifeline of love: first impressions, courting, being in a relationship, before wedding and married life.

In what follows I will deal with *Love's Labour's Won*, a supposedly lost Shakespearean comedy and although few data is available concerning this play, I believe these should be considered within this topic.

After this, I will point out that up till now, none of the famous Shakespeare scholars have explored, defined or even labelled the relationship between these two comedies by Shakespeare. I think that there is much more to these two dramas than having merely one or two similar characters, themes, parts or features. One needs to define in what way *Love's Labour's Lost* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* relate to each other.

## **II. The critics' awareness of the relationship between *Love's Labour's Lost* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream***

### **2.1 Recognition of partial similarities**

Several critics find the two comedies to belong to one subgroup among Shakespeare's comedies. On resemblance of style and language they belong to a group of works created around the same time including the *Sonnets*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Richard II* (Barton, 1974 175). Northrop Frye thinks that concerning the plot, both comedies follow the Greek New Comedy (a young man who desires a woman, certain obstacles arise – mostly from the father – and by the end of the drama, through some kind of a twist, he is able to reach his goal, is united with the heroine and a new society is formed, which has the hero at its centre) (Frye 1998, 139-147). Frye also notes that both plays belong to a special category of Shakespearean comedies called “comedies of the green world.” The events of the comedy start in the normal world, then move to the

"green world," where they go through a kind of metamorphosis, which leads to the comic resolution, and finally, they return to the normal world.

Most of the critics who report on any kind of relationship of *Love's Labour's Lost* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* reflect on their 'maturity', overwhelmingly remarking that *Love's Labour's Lost* is a weaker, less profound, "early comedy" and overall a less mature play than *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. They do so even though the two, most likely, had been created only months apart: Shakespeare wrote *Love's Labour's Lost* around 1594-1595 and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* around 1595-1596, after taking a trip to other genres. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* overall has received a better appreciation from the critics and was regarded as Shakespeare's first mature comedy.

This view of imbalance between the two plays has been supported for hundreds of years and has a tradition ever since Hazlitt and Dr. Johnson planted this seed in the critical approach of this comedy (Barton 1974, 174).

"If we were to part with any of the author's comedies it should be this," wrote Hazlitt of *Love's Labour's Lost*, and his opinion was shared by most critics between Shakespeare's day and our own. (David 1956, xiii)

Tibor Fabiny in his *Számszimbolika a Lóvátett lovagokban* has showed that there are many levels of additional interpretations weaved deeply within this play, so it would be a mistake to dismiss it from the Shakespearean canon as immature and not worthy of the author. Anikó Oroszlán has presented the appreciation of *Love's Labour's Lost* in her article *Mikor víg a játék?* (Oroszlán, 2003, 23).

Most of the critics who report on a kind of similarity between *Love's Labour's Lost* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* mention the play within the play scenes of the dramas. E. M. W. Tillyard claims that when the order of the pageant is considered in *Love's Labour's Lost* "one cannot help reflecting" on Theseus' case of previously not ordering the tragicomically clumsy play, which, as he says, "corresponds" to the pageant (Tillyard 1965, 148). Robert Ornstein reports on this as seeing this resemblance as a transformation with a direction of an improvement from one to the other: "Shakespeare will remember and redeem the fiasco of the pageant of the Worthies in the triumphant performance of "Pyramus and Thisbe" in the last scene of *A Dream*" (Ornstein 1986, 47).

Bonazza sees this resemblance as a kind of heritage: "Shakespeare even borrowed from himself: Bottom and His fellow actors trace their ancestry to Costard and the other Worthies of *Love's Labour's Lost*..." (Bonazza 1966, 116). László Kéry has a similar view on this 'heritage' as he claims the performance of the artisans has a prefiguration in Act V. in *Love's Labour's Lost* (Kéry 1964, 143). László Kéry is one of the few critics who deals with the similarities in

detail. He claims that the most striking resemblance of all is between the two play-within-the-play scenes. The tendency to forgive the companies for their poor acting and thinking of watching their performance as a noble deed is present in both comedies (Kéry 1964, 143).

Other scholars who have mentioned this similarity include Anikó Oroszlán in her article *Mikor víg a játék?*, Kenneth Muir in his *Shakespeare's Comic Sequence*, and Derek Traversi in his *Approach to Shakespeare*.

Other issues mentioned by the critics as being alike include the speeches of Puck and Berowne and the characters themselves, the masquerade of mixing lovers, the resemblance of Hermia and Rosaline and the appearance of the theme of death influencing the action of both plays.

Oroszlán reports on the resemblance of Berowne's asking the ladies' excuse for the lords' well intended but falsely turned out masquerade in *Love's Labour's Lost* to Puck's praise of the audience's appreciation of the play of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Oroszlán 2003, 23). István Géher made an even stronger point when he said Berowne himself is similar to Puck (Géher 1991, 121). On the resemblance between characters, Jan Kott recognized Rosaline in the character of Hermia (Kott 1970, 256). László Kéry spotted the mistaking and problematic, yet carnivalistic and quite funny mixing of the couples in both comedies (Kéry 1964, 143).

Charles L. Lyons recalls that in *Love's Labour's Lost* the theme of death overshadows and prolongs the happy ending with the uniting of the couples, just like the threat of this theme overshadows Hermia and Lysander's desired love (Lyons 1971, 35).

## 2.2 Recognition of the resemblance of the dramas themselves

All the above mentioned exhibits show that the vast majority of the scholars who recognize the similarity between *Love's Labour's Lost* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* contribute to this issue only in terms of certain features: an interlude, a character, a monologue or an event. However, some critics claim that in some aspects the comedies themselves are similar.

Dezső Mészöly claims that from the play within the play scenes it is obvious that in *Love's Labour's Lost* Shakespeare was actually preparing for the improvement entitled *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Mészöly gives a kind of possible interpretation, when he thinks of the two plays as steps of an evolutionary procedure (Mészöly 1987, 487).

Both the Riverside and the Arden editions mention a strong connection between these two comedies of Shakespeare. Anne Barton writes in the introduction to *Love's Labour's Lost*:



Between *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Love's Labour's Lost*, as might be expected, the connection is especially close. (Barton 1974, 175)

She lists affinities of style, linguistic exuberance and the wording of the comic convention as proofs (Barton 1974, 174-6).

In the introduction of the Arden Edition of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Harold F. Brooks mentions similarities of lyricism, purpose and occasion, forms of versification, amount of rhyming, songs, no known source, yet *A Midsummer Night's Dream* using *Love's Labour's Lost* as a source, the proverb "Jack shall have Jill" being reflected on at the end, and the perspective of seeing lovers as passionate lunatics (Brooks 1979, lxxvi). It also mentions G. K. Hunter's recognition of both comedies taking after Lylyan drama and C. L. Barber's perception of Shakespeare's beginning "to concentrate on constructive ideas drawn from festival" in these two plays.

The most relevant comments to the relationship of the two dramas include "... in important respects, the *Dream* is a successor of *Love's Labour's Lost*" and reports on the similarity of the *Dream* to other dramas:

I have found more parallels in the *Dream* with *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Romeo* than with any other plays. [...]

Unlike *The Comedy of Errors*, *the Shrew*, and *Two Gentlemen*, each [*Love's Labour's Lost* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*] derives its construction in part from Lyly's plan of relating to a central subject, such as might form a theme for disputation, a succession of episodes enacted by self-contained groups. (Brooks 1979, lxxvii)

Observing these marks and notes, the amount of similarities between *Love's Labour's Lost* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* deserves attention.

### III. Contributing to the list of resemblances with additional items and remarks

#### 3.1 Similar female characters

The ladies of these comedies present an obvious case of similarity. The Princess of France resembles Helena in a way. When they are called beautiful, both take it as an offence and refuse compliments. Neither of them believes others

that she is beautiful. Both are thought to be delicate by others and mentioned to be light – skinned or white compared to their friends.

Similarly, Rosaline corresponds to Hermia. Both are referred to as dark. Both start a fight among women, when they are insulted and called dark. Both are of main importance. Rosaline plays a big part in the quarrels and she is the one who tells the lords that the ladies have seen through their games and knew what was going on. Hermia and her strong-willed personality is the reason for the initial problematic situation of the *Dream*.

The Princess of France can also be linked to Titania, the Queen of the Fairies. Both of them are in the highest position among the females and neither of them can be handled by their beloved man. All the other female protagonists are inferior to them.

Rosaline resembles Hippolyta for they are both mentioned in relation with Diana and torturing men. Diana was the Roman goddess of hunting and fertility. Shakespeare was familiar with ancient mythology and so was his audience, so he could use classical metaphors and imagery in his works as a means of analogy. Rosaline compares herself to a hunter, referring to Diana, and intends to torture Berowne. Hippolyta is the Queen of the Amazons. The Amazons, in Greek mythology, were a race of women warriors who worshipped Artemis, Diana's Greek equivalent (Kerényi 1997, 247). Both Rosaline and Hippolyta are mentioned to be servants or second highest in power.

### 3.2 Imagery and metaphors concerning the female characters

In both *Love's Labour's Lost* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* all major female characters are mentioned in connection with Diana, the Greek goddess of hunting who represents female independence. Diana is mentioned by the Princess of France and Rosaline declares herself to be a hunter. Diana's other name is Titania, which identifies Shakespeare's Queen of the Fairies with the Greek goddess. Her servant on earth is Hippolyta, the Queen of the Amazons. Both titles "Fairy Queen" and "Diana" often referred to Queen Elizabeth I (Laroque 1993, 91-100).

In both comedies a light and a dark female character is mentioned and there is a great difference between them. This introduces us to the imagery of the day and night, and their great difference. The Summer Solstice, June 21, is the day of the year when the night is the shortest and the day is the longest, which happens to be around the Day of Midsummer, June 24.

Shakespeare creates an important image of midsummer night through the medium of stage iconography. While Hermia is short and dark - a

'minimus', an 'Ethiope' - Helena is tall and fair like a 'painted maypole'. As a pair, Hermia and Helena constitute an emblem of midsummer when the bright day is very long and the dark night is very short. The conflict between them reflects the battle of day and night, a battle which reaches its turning point at midsummer. (Wiles 1998, 76)

This emblem is also formed in *Love's Labour's Lost*. Here, it is the Princess of France who is called light and compared to Rosaline, who is dark.

If we look at the major female characters of these two plays we will find that Shakespeare halved his two most significant female protagonists of *Love's Labour's Lost* and thus made four of them in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. He used the Princess of France as a source of Titania and Helena. Titania inherited the character of the most powerful female and Helena is just as light-skinned as the Princess of *Love's Labour's Lost*. At the making of Hippolyta and Hermia he turned to Rosaline as a muse. Hermia got the dark skin and Hippolyta got the position of the servant, who is the second most powerful of all the female characters.

### 3.3 Rites and traditions in the dramas

When we are dealing with any of Shakespeare's comedies, we have to be aware that they were strongly influenced by ancient and contemporary traditions and he often enriched his plays with rites, customs, myths, tales and emblems. I have already mentioned the emblem of midsummer implied in both dramas and Frye's theory on the comic tradition of the Greek New Comedy which they share.

Shakespeare employs a confusion of lovers very frequently in his comedies. Through this, he actually interweaves a contemporary English custom into these dramas: the mixing of the lovers is a Saint Valentine's Day tradition. This tradition is present in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* fully as David Wiles writes:

The game played on Saint Valentine's day whereby boy A chases girl B who chases boy C who chases girl D is startlingly analogous to the to the plot structure of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. (Wiles 1998, 72)

In *Love's Labour's Lost*, this tradition is present less completely. In the masque of Muscovites the lords get misled because the ladies have exchanged the gifts they received from their men, thus the lords court different ladies. However, this confused situation is not complete because these ladies and lords do not form real circles of love or love triangles. The actions of the lords are clearly

mistakes, as they have no intentions of changing their minds concerning the target of their affection, and when they notice the trick of the ladies they stand abashed and uncomprehending.

There are other features of the Saint Valentine's Day tradition in the two comedies. In *Love's Labour's Lost* Katherine receives a pair of gloves from Dumain. The custom of giving a present of money, or gloves is that of Saint Valentine's Day's. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* the characteristic custom of this feast is "whereby one's 'Valentine' is the first person whom one sees when one wakes in the morning" (Wiles 1998, 72-73) for which Titania fell, due to the magic ointment on her eyes.

Another tradition that is present in both dramas is the festival of May Day. On this day the young got up early and went into the woods to bring back a tree to make it into a maypole. They painted and decorated it, and then they danced around it (Kéry 1964, 131). This tradition of going into the woods is present in *Love's Labour's Lost* two times, when the lords go to meet the ladies. The first time they go to the woods, they fall in love with the ladies - for the second time, they return to court them in a masquerade by night. The wood in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* gives place to magic and confusion, consequently, it is a natural realm of the fairies. Hermia and Lysander decide to elope from the harshness of law and go into the woods.

These three traditions can be understood as the three phases of selecting a partner, courting and marriage, which lovers go through.

The three festivals of Saint Valentine's Day, May Day and Midsummer are interwoven in the central, liminal portion of *Midsummer Night's Dream*, framed by the scene at court. They are not selected at random for they reflect symbolically three phases in the life cycle of a young person: mate selection, courtship and marriage. And this is the process through which the young aristocrats pass in the liminal, greenwood section of the play. (Wiles 1998, 76-77)

Although in *Love's Labour's Lost* all three traditions are present, the four couples only get to the second phase. The promise of a continuation of their relationship is vowed, nonetheless, the fulfilment of this promise is missing from the drama. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* presents cases after this phase.

### 3.4 The comic conventions worded in the dramas

The traditional ending of a comedy is worded in both dramas, implying self-realization of the genre. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* ends properly, according

to the comic convention. As Puck steps out to ask the kind acceptance of their comedy by the audience, he concludes:

Puck. Jack shall have Jill,  
Nought shall go ill;  
The man shall have his mare again, and all shall be well. (MND 3.2.  
461-463)

On the contrary, *Love's Labour's Lost* lacks a satisfyingly happy ending. Berowne is the one who realizes that the end of their play does not suit the comic convention. When the ladies respond with flagging a possibility of access to their hands within a year, he notes that this solution is too long for a comedy.

Ber. Our wooing doth not end like an old play;  
Jack hath not Jill: the ladies' courtesy  
Might well have made our sport a comedy.  
.....(LLL 5.2. 864-866)

Anne Barton reports on this, as "It is only by being for a little while lost that love's labour can eventually, and fully be won" (Barton 1974, 177). This could serve as a possible interpretation of the ending, nevertheless, there are certain facts that imply that in the end love's labour may be lost. Taking into consideration the title of the play, that the lords broke all the oaths they made, and the fact that Berowne notes that the offer the ladies made is too far, the prospects are not promising. The end of *Love's Labour's Lost* is actually open, but within the boundaries of the actual wording of the drama love's labour is not won yet.

#### **IV. Why *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Midsummer Night's Dream*? Why are these two dramas special?**

What makes these two comedies stand out of all the other comedies? Why is this relationship more special than that of two other early Shakespearean comedies? Most of Shakespeare's comedies imply the feature of mixing lovers, hidden identities and all Shakespearean comedies feature love as a problematic issue. However, it is only these two comedies where the problematic love of *four* couples is at the centre of the play. Furthermore, no other comedies

could be joined together regarding the stages of the lifecycle of love: in *Love's Labour's Lost* all four couples are at the stage of making acquaintance with the other and courting, while the *Dream* presents all the stages of love after these two steps – Helena and Demetrius were once a couple, but they no longer are, Hermia and Lysander are fighting for their relationship to be acknowledged and plan to get married, Hippolyta and Theseus are just four days away from their wedding day, Oberon and Titania have been married for some time.

### **Other early dramas being featured in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*?**

In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* the elements of several other plays are present. The mixing of the couples because one male protagonist changes his mind and falls for another lady has occurred already in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. A man struggling with his wife is the main theme of *The Taming of the Shrew*. Similarly, the eloping of two unaccepted lovers is a well-known event from *Romeo and Juliet*, which is actually parodied by the interlude of the artisans 'Pyramus and Thisbe' in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. We can see that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is like a fusion pot of other earlier dramas of Shakespeare.

In fact, all these comedies, with the exception of *Love's Labour's Lost*, have identified literary sources (Barton 1974, 79-221). *Love's Labour's Lost* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* are indeed the first comedies of Shakespeare for which he did not turn to a piece of literature well-known at his time.

All these pieces of information show that Shakespeare probably interweaved his earlier works into *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Although the resemblances of certain parts, themes or events of these dramas to those of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* are obvious, these resemblances are not as significant as the resemblance to *Love's Labour's Lost*. In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* Proteus does abandon Julia for Sylvia and thus betray his friendship to Valentine, but the mixing of the couples is incomplete because Valentine does not fall in love with Julia. Unlike in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, where Lysander and Demetrius first desire Hermia, then later, under a magic spell, both fall in love with Helena. And in *Love's Labour's Lost* we can again observe a complete rearrangement of the couples for a short while. The taming of Katherine by Petruchio could be compared to the fight between Titania and Oberon, but Oberon is only able to work his will upon his wife when she is under a spell. *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet* is turned into "A tedious brief scene of young Pyramus and his love Thisbe; very tragical mirth" (5.1. 56-7) and apart from the elopement of the lovers because of the merciless father of the lady, the two works are apparently different. On the other hand, the close relation of *Love's Labour's Lost* to the *Dream* is astounding. I found that *Love's*

*Labour's Lost* is in closer relation to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* than any other known comedy written by Shakespeare.

## V. The possible interpretations of the relationship

As we have seen there is an obvious resemblance between *Love's Labour's Lost* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and this has been recognized to some extent. Harold F. Brooks in his introduction to the Arden edition of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* concludes that *Love's Labour's Lost* is the source of the *Dream*:

A detail which confirms that in the *Dream* Shakespeare recalled *Love's Labour's Lost* is Puck's affirmation of the proverb, 'Jack shall have Jill', surely not without recollection, on Shakespeare's part, of Berowne's 'Jack hath not Jill' (5.2.865). (Brooks 1979, lxxvii)

However, I have found other interpretations that describe the relationship as worthy of study: these understand the dramas to form a sequel or complete each other.

The basis of the relevance of the *Dream* being a sequel to *Love's Labour's Lost* is grounded on the fact that in Shakespeare's time it was usual to write sequels. Just to mention some examples that we know of, Thomas Kyd's famous *Spanish Tragedy* does not stand alone, as its subtitle *Hieronimo is mad* again suggests, which points out that this tragedy should be considered together with its antecedent, which, funnily enough, is a comedy entitled *Spanish Comedy*. Ben Jonson had also written twin dramas: *Every Man in his Humour* and *Every Man out of his Humour*. Thus it seems to be logical to consider Shakespeare having written a sequel or sequels too.

In the case of *Love's Labour's Lost* and the *Dream*, however, it is obvious there is no indication of one being a sequel to the other in the title and the characters have different names. Nevertheless, I think that the main theme of a problematic courting and pursuing love of the 4 couples in *Love's Labour's Lost* can complement the problematic relationships and marriages of the 4 couples in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. I think that *Love's Labour's Lost* can serve as a sequel to the *Dream* in terms of the theme of problematic love and relationships at the stages of love's life-circle.

The possibility of these two dramas completing each other means that if you place the two beside each other, they will make more sense. In fact, together these two Shakespearean comedies have an additional, so called bonus

interpretation. They are independent comedies, but if we place the two side by side, we see that they are two halves of a new picture. If we read the two plays one after the other, what new message, point of view or interpretation do we get? Here we have to remember of the quote by David Wiles:

The three festivals of Saint Valentine's Day, May Day and Midsummer are interwoven in the central, liminal portion of *Midsummer Night's Dream*, framed by the scene at court. They are not selected at random for they reflect symbolically three phases in the life cycle of a young person: mate selection, courtship and marriage. And this is the process through which the young aristocrats pass in the liminal, greenwood section of the play. (Wiles 1998, 77-78)

I would extend his idea of the three customs drawing the lifeline of love completely presented by *Love's Labour's Lost* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* together. Since, in order to have a complete lifeline we need to see the stage of courting from the very start: from the point when the two people meet, fall in love, exclaim that they are in love and decide to pursue their love, as we see in *Love's Labour's Lost*. I think that these stages are essential in the lifeline of love but to be completed, we need the stages of declaring the relationship in the face of all aridities, engagement and marriage, which we find in the *Dream*. As for the additional target of laughter, love is ridiculed at all ages and all stages. In my opinion the best possible interpretation is the comedies being interpreted together to see the complete lifeline of love unfolding.

## VI. *Love's Labour's Won*: facts and significance

### 6.1 A lost comedy?

*Love's Labour's Won* is a play written by Shakespeare. There is not only evidence of its existence, but also of its reaching print. Francis Meres' mentioned it as an excellent comedy of Shakespeare and with a fragment of a bookseller's list around 1637-1638 also lists it among the sold items between 9 to 17 August 1603 in the south of England. We know of 500 to 1500 copies that were once in circulation. (Wells 1986, 349)

However, I only found three books that mention it and are available in Hungary. One of them is Philip Edwards' *Shakespeare – A writer's progress*.



Though Edwards only mentions the play once in the main body of his work and gives a few lines about it once in the table (Edwards, 1986, 97).

Stanley Wells supplies us with more information on this play in William Shakespeare: *The Complete Works*.

Taken together, Meres' reference in 1598 and the 1603 fragment appear to demonstrate that a play by Shakespeare called *Love's Labour's Won* had been performed by the time Meres wrote and was in print by August 1603. (Wells 1986, 349)

In his work Wells also mentions another lost play, *Cardenio*, and highlights that other plays have trouble with or have no complete first edition. Wells implies other crucial pieces of information on this play in this "brief account:"

Meres explicitly states, and the title implies, that it was a comedy. Its titular pairing with *Love's Labour's Lost* suggests that they may have been written at about the same time. Both Meres and the bookseller's catalogue place it after *Love's Labour's Lost*; although neither list is necessarily chronological, Meres' does otherwise agree with our own view of the order of composition of Shakespeare's comedies. (Wells 1986, 349)

In 2004, the *Essential Shakespeare Handbook's* Hungarian translation was published, and although it can only be categorized as tertiary literature, it is interesting because it provides an interpretation of its relationship with *Love's Labour's Lost*. It claims that *Love's Labour's Lost* was probably a two-piece play, of which *Love's Labour's Won* was the second part. In the second part the ladies may return and the lovers get married finally. (Dunton-Downer and Riding 2004, 156)

Taking into consideration all these pieces of information, my own interpretation is that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* has evolved from *Love's Labour's Lost* and in this evolution *Love's Labour's Won* was a stage in this process. It is quite likely that Shakespeare first wrote his twin comedies *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Love's Labour's Won* and, possibly in a year's time, the *Dream*.

## 6.2. The role of *Love's Labour's Won*

If we rely on Meres' account, we can assume that *Love's Labour's Lost* was probably written first. Shakespeare wrote its sequel with an ending of love's labour being won after all, and he also made this alteration visible in the title

of this new comedy. Later, he returned to it and placing it into a different setting, he decided to turn it inside out and wrote its reflection. This is the comedy known today as *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

On the other hand, if we give significance to the fact that the 1598 edition of *Love's Labour's Lost* is said to be 'Newly corrected and augmented', there is a chance that *Love's Labour's Won* was the title of the uncorrected version of it (Wells, 1986, 315). In this interpretation Shakespeare wrote *Love's Labour's Won*, then he corrected it and added an ending that does not satisfy the comic convention of his time. He returned to this play after a while and wrote its mirror image, the *Dream*.

Whatever version or interpretation we decide to take, several facts show that the relationship between *Love's Labour's Lost* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is especially tight, the latter reflects on the first and the significance of *Love's Labour's Won* in this relation cannot be overlooked.

## VII. Conclusion

In my investigation I tried to prove that the topic of analyzing the relationship between *Love's Labour's Lost* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is one that is worth researching. I have surveyed a wide range of critical appreciation of this topic and added my observations to this list. In addition, I tried to give an answer to why I think these two comedies should be the subject of a comparison and why not other dramas.

I considered whether the relationship between these plays can be described as completion. It is true that *Love's Labour's Lost* is a source just as much as the others and its theme is obviously carried on in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. However, we get the complete picture if we place the two dramas beside each other in our mind and regard the additional meanings that these thus describe. The complete lifeline of love or a young lover: acquaintance, courting, wedding, marriage. The accumulative laughter, which is created by the constant returning of the 4 couples of the clumsy, fishy lovers. We could not be aware of these if we would not consider these two dramas together.

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# Towards An Ecocritical Approach of John Milton's *Lycidas*

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This paper examines John Milton's famous pastoral poem, *Lycidas*, which was published in 1637. There are two basic questions posed in the present examination. First, I would like to explore the ways in which the poem is related to the pastoral tradition, calling attention to certain tensions permeating the tradition. Then I would like to figure out whether it is possible to read the text in the framework of ecocriticism, a critical school having been emerging from the 1990s, promising new ways of investigating the relationship between literary works and the physical world surrounding us. Since pastoral is an important area of study for ecocriticism, the juxtaposition will hopefully turn out to be a productive one.

## I. Introduction

There is a long tradition of commemorating a fellow poet in English literature. Among others, Edmund Spenser (*Astrophel*, 1595), John Milton (*Lycidas*, 1637), John Dryden (*To the Memory of Mr Oldham*, 1684), Percy Bysshe Shelley (*Adonais*, 1821), and Alfred Tennyson (*In Memoriam A. H. H.*, 1850) had once expressed a poetic farewell to a poet departing from life. This illustrious list and the similarity of the topic alone urges a common assessment of the poems, however, the present paper only undertakes the examination of John Milton's *Lycidas*. Why should one read this poem at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century? A part of the answer, surprisingly, lies in the epigraph of a medical paper with the intriguing title *Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy and Variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob*

*Disease: Background, Evolution, and Current Concerns* (Brown et al. 2001). In 2004, there were library miseries in my city, so I had to rely more on the internet, and the above title was put on the screen by one of the popular search engines as a result for the query concerning John Milton's *Lycidas*. The link between Milton's poem and the paper on the mad cow disease is nothing more than that in the epigraph of the paper, the author quotes the following lines from *Lycidas*:

The hungry Sheep look up, and are not fed,  
But swoln with wind, and the rank mist they draw  
Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread...

I immediately started to think about the question: how can a medical paper published in 2001 use Milton's text for any purpose? What is the basis of the dialogue between a 17<sup>th</sup> century poem and a 21<sup>st</sup> century medical paper? The answer, as someone more involved in the literature part of the problem I finally decided, must be encoded in the poem and the purpose of this paper is to decode that answer.

Opposed to a previous version of my paper (where I touched upon the following themes: pastoral mode, Biblical theme, the tradition of funeral poetry, apocalypticism) I decided to single out the pastoral mode as the focus of investigation, because I think that the real value of *Lycidas* lies in the revolutionary way the pastoral mode is reinterpreted by it. As I will argue for it later, this pastoral-centred approach necessarily leads to an ecocritical re-evaluation of the poem. Consequently, my main questions are the following. How does Milton use the pastoral mode? How can the poem be read in the context of twenty-first century, particularly in an ecocritical framework of discussion?

As for the methodology applied, I will offer two parallel readings of the poems. First, I will pay attention to the way the pastoral mode is represented by the text. As a reference, I will use secondary sources about English pastoral. Then I will perform a reading that is probably more focused on the present-day reader, and my aim through this is to discover how the present context (especially the environmental crisis) influences the reading of the text.

## II. Pastoral

From the perspective of the present paper, it is quite problematic that by today modern secondary literature on pastoral has become so abundant

and complex that there is no hope at all to provide an overview of or at least a more detailed glimpse at it. Therefore, I decided to select two recent comprehensive monographs on pastoral to develop my thesis. While choosing the two monographs, my basic effort was to select two works completely different in nature. The first one is of a more encyclopaedic character: Elze Kegel-Brinkgreve's book offers an overview of the international development of the genre from Theocritus to Wordsworth, especially focusing on the peak of English Pastoral, that is from Spenser to Marvell (Brinkgreve 1990). This is a kind of – more or less – chronological review of primary and secondary sources, underpinned with a significant number of quotations. On the other hand, Terry Gifford's *Pastoral* is a great deal different (Gifford 1999). The book is more theoretical (especially the first chapter), and the theoretical considerations discussed in the book, the concept of anti-pastoral and postpastoral proved to be very thought-provoking for me, not to mention the link between pastoral and ecocriticism, which directed my attention towards a completely new approach.

As a first step towards understanding the nature of pastoral, it is important to clarify the more general category of what we term as 'pastoral.' There are pastoral poems, pastor dramas, pastoral novels, and so on. So it is definitely wrong to think of pastoral as a genre, as it is rather a way of expression, a tone of voice, a system of conventions universally accessible in virtually every genre. The universality of pastoral can be traced in Puttenham's statement: "Some be of opinion ... that the pastoral Poesie ... should be the first of any other, and before the *Satyre*, *Comedie* or *Tragedie*" (Loughrey 1984, 34). The proper term, according to Brinkgreve is 'mode', and during my paper, I will also use this, although I am not fully convinced of its validity in all circumstances.

Brinkgreve reviews a number of definition-attempts in her book, and stresses the problems of definition (where no reference is provided, the source is Brinkgreve 1990, 377-379). The following lines are especially important:

According to M. Gerhardt pastoral is essentially anti-realistic, an autonomous literary fiction, in which imitation is a major formative stimulus. This thesis represents a great advance when compared to the notion (...) that pastoral is an insipid and artificial convention (Brinkgreve 1990, 377).

Although she does not agree fully with Gerhardt's definition (she especially questions the anti-realism of pastoral), it is important to highlight the autonomy and the imitative nature of pastoral, and we also have to keep in mind the problem of artificial conventionality. The next point is connected to the name of Sir Walter Wilson Greg, who claims that the prime mover of the

genre is the "town-dweller's nostalgia for the supposedly peaceful existence of the shepherd in his idyllic environment," but Brinkgreve finds this a simplified view lacking the important element of masquerade.

Brinkgreve also presents a methodological consideration among the presentation of different definitions: "When a scholar discusses 'pastoral', his idea of the genre may well derive from some presuppositions and a reading experience which tends to colour his general conclusions." I think this is very important in understanding how pastoral works, maybe even more important than to give an exact definition of the mode. Moving towards a conclusion about the definitions, Brinkgreve introduces a strange conditional method (worked out by D.M. Halperin) as the most acceptable, which is based on four criteria (Brinkgreve 1990, 379). This definition, resembling the flow chart of a computer program, seems to be more or less accepted by Brinkgreve, yet she is again asking for the masquerade aspect of the pastoral tradition, which is absent from Halperin's definition-system. She also notices the problem of development and the changing nature of the tradition, and thus the question comprising the chapter title (*What is pastoral?*) is eventually left unanswered.

Terry Gifford's book defines three different meanings for pastoral. In the first sense, "pastoral is a historical form with a long tradition" (Gifford 1999, 1). The basic requirement in a pastoral work of art, in this sense, is the presence of shepherds. The second sense reveals a broader use of the term: "In this sense pastoral refers to any literature that describes the country with an implicit or explicit contrast to the urban" (Gifford 1999, 2). The first two definitions are quite traditional, however, the third usage of the term is something new, and it can be summed up by Gifford's example:

A Greenpeace supporter might use the term as a criticism of the tree poem if it ignored the presence of pollution or the threat to urban trees from city developers. Here the difference between the literary representation of nature and the material reality would be judged to be intolerable by the criteria of ecological concern (Gifford 1999, 2).

The novelty of Gifford's book is the linking of the genre to a relatively new critical approach, ecocriticism: "literary ecocriticism ... has also led to the rereading, through modern ecological perspectives, of earlier literature, such as the pastoral, that engaged with our relationship with the natural environment" (Gifford 1999, 5). We also have to mention Gifford's notion of the "fundamental pastoral movement", which is retreat or return, the latter also meaning the return of something to the audience. This, in case of a pastoral elegy, is especially important, but on a more general level, its importance lies in the obvious reference to Golden Age.



A certain "pastoral anomaly" is often experienced when reading pastoral poems, which could be illustrated by the opposition of two earlier opinions on the mode. The first is the 15<sup>th</sup> century Cristoforo Landino, who praises Virgil's eclogues in the following fashion:

He conceals under that commonplace meaning another one which is far more excellent; so that the work is enriched with a double argument, which is geared to the surface meaning and also brings out the hidden sense (Landino quoted by Brinkgreve 1990, 369).

Now if we contrast this with Samuel Johnson's famous criticism of *Lycidas*, it becomes even more interesting. Condemning Milton's use of the pastoral mode, Johnson writes:

We know that they never drove a field, and that they had no flocks to batten; and though it be allowed that the representation may be allegorical, the true meaning is so uncertain and remote, that it is never sought, because it cannot be known when it is found (quoted in Loughrey 1984, 71).

It seems that although Johnson is aware of the allegorical nature of pastoral, he does not get the point of the "double argument". If we, following Brinkgreve, accept that pastoral is in a sense masquerade, then we get to the centre of the pastoral anomaly: there is continuous performance, the shepherds are on a virtual (or real) stage, but because of the double argument, in order to understand the poems, we have to identify the director's feelings and attitudes, and definitely not those of the actors and the acted characters. So if someone takes the "first argument" at face value, he or she will not be able to conceive the second argument. Doctor Johnson, in my opinion, misunderstood the poem, when he expressed the above objection, which shows how sensitive an approach, what open-minded attitude is needed to discover the elements beyond the surface of a pastoral poem.

Because of the problems already flagged, there is no hope of offering an incontestable definition of pastoral. The only thing I can offer is *my* pastoral approach, to be applied when reading the poem in the next chapter. Therefore, my working definition could be described in this fashion: an autonomous, (not always) anti-realistic, imitative literary fiction – conventional in nature, driven by nostalgia, operating with oppositions – which contrasts imperfect reality and its harmonious artistic representation in a carvinalesque manner.

### III. *Lycidas* – first attempt

In my first attempt at reading Milton's poem, I examine how the poem handles the pastoral mode. My starting point is the separate subsection in Brinkgreve's book on *Lycidas*, in which she places Milton's poem in the pastoral tradition and provides a reading of the poem focusing on its relation to the predecessors (Brinkgreve 1999, 521-530). However, I cannot fully agree with her basic attitude: she deals with the pastoral elements of the text in detail, but, although she identifies the non-pastoral qualities of the poem, she almost completely neglects them. This neglect of the poem's non-pastoral values is also questioned by George Parfitt's study on 17<sup>th</sup> century funeral poetry: "accounts ignore the extent to which *Lycidas* belongs very clearly to the tradition of funeral poetry in its century" (Parfitt 1992, 114). Of course, above all, *Lycidas* is a pastoral poem. Nonetheless, I think that there are certain aspects of *Lycidas* that give the poem some kind of novelty as opposed to the famous predecessors like Spenser and Sidney. Through skilful use of rather non-conventional devices, Milton creates a kind of "distancing" effect. The poem does not let the reader get attracted by the simplicity of pastoral, Milton forces the reader to seek for the "double argument" mentioned above. The process of a comfortable return or retreat (which, according to Gifford, is one of the most important facets of pastoral, see the chapter entitled '*The Discourse of Retreat*') is denied (Gifford 1999, 45-80). One of the most interesting questions is why Milton did this. But before answering that, first we should be able to see *how* he did it.

From this perspective the epigraph attached to the poem is more than problematic. Considering the fact that the poem was published in a collection of poems commemorating Edward King, I think it is completely pointless to repeat the objective here. It was obvious that the poem would be about King, and because of the context, everyone could identify the dead shepherd with Edward King. On the other hand, the last part of the epigraph is something unusual in a pastoral text. If we accept Gifford's statement that "(...) pastoral is a discourse, a way of using language that constructs a different kind of world from that of realism (Gifford 1999, 45)", then it is quite hard to get along with the problem that Milton proposes the criticism of a "real" institution (the church) in the epigraph. Beside the pre-text, elements of realism are also present in some of the place names to be found in *Lycidas*, summed up in the following chart:

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Mona (l. 54)     | The Island of Anglesey (in the Irish Sea). |
| Deva (l. 55)     | River Dee.                                 |
| Mincius (l. 86)  | River running through Mantua.              |
| Camus (l. 103)   | River Cam, flowing through Cambridge.      |
| Hebrides (l. 92) | Islands off the Scottish coast.            |

In understanding of the poem, it is a key point to discover the function of this realism, but I will try to provide an answer only after the examination of other important parts of the poem.

Already the opening of the poem delivers some perplexity. Nature is represented here, but the poetic self must “pluck” the three traditional branches (laurel, myrtle, ivy) of the poetic crown, as described in lines 1-5. The cause of this is the death of Lycidas, who also died prematurely. So the first moment in the poem involves some kind of attack against nature, and this makes the reader uneasy. We expect nature and harmony, but get some dissonant feeling instead; the usual peace of nature seems to be disturbed. Brinkgreve also claims that the manner these branches are addressed here is quite unusual (Brinkgreve 1990, 522).

The next part is the calling of the Muses. Brinkgreve suggests that the following lines express the speaker's hope that “a later poet in his turn will pay comparable homage to the speaker's own grave”:

So may some gentle Muse  
With lucky words favour my destined urn (l. 16-17)

However, the previous line, in my opinion, significantly changes the meaning of these lines: “Hence with denial vain, and coy excuse” (l. 15). Anxiety seems to pervade this line, and the dominant feeling of the poetic self here is not necessarily the grief for the dead friend, but his own realising of unavoidable death. So the problem is: who is this poem about? Is the poet commemorating Lycidas, as suggested by the title, or is he dealing with his own problems? I think here the pastoral framework is left for a while and traces of a more subjective lyric poem appear. Several studies address this question regarding the poem's impersonality/personality. Northop Frye leads back the general accusation of the poem with being artificial and without real feeling to Samuel Johnson, stating that “Johnson knew better, but he happened to feel perverse about this particular poem, and so deliberately raised false issues” (Frye in Loughrey 1984, 210). He adds that the basic problem is the confusion between personal sincerity and literary sincerity, and also states that “personal sincerity has no place in literature, because personal sincerity as such is inarticulate”

(Frye in Loughrey 1984, 210). At the same time he claims that from a literary perspective, the poem *is* passionately sincere, as Milton was deeply interested in funeral elegies. Frye concludes that to ask for *personal* sincerity in a *literary* work is a fallacy.

Writing about Lycidas, J. Martin Evans differentiates two kinds of reactions to the issues raised by Johnson. One kind of reaction (represented by Tillyard), states that the nominal and the real subject of the poem should be differentiated: “King is but the excuse for one of Milton’s most personal poems” (Tillyard quoted by Evans 1989, 40). The other line of defence is centred on the thought that grief can hardly be translated into words, and “traditional forms such as the pastoral elegy ... provide us with a way of giving shape and order to what otherwise might have been chaotic, fragmented, and unspoken” (Evans 1989, 41). According to this logic, “As such [an occasional poem], it is public, ceremonial, formal rather than private, personal and spontaneous” (Evans 1989, 41). Evans finds neither of these ideas satisfying, and after a detailed comparison of Milton’s poem and Virgil’s tenth eclogue, he arrives to the conclusion that the poem is about the problem of “the fugitive and cloistered virtue” as exemplified by Edward King (Evans 1989, 43), a returning idea of Milton, if we consider the concept of blank virtue in *Areopagitica*.

I think all these opinions are right in one sense or another. The solely literature-centred approach mentioned by Frye seems to me only partially acceptable: it may well be true in case of the writer of the text, but as for the reader, the scope must be widened. If there is intermingling between a text from the world of humanity and a text from the world of science (remember the medical scientist quoting Milton), then we must accept that a reader “takes” many presuppositions into his or her reading, and these presuppositions are not limited to reading experiences. As for Evans’s thoughts, I think that his arguments are quite convincing, and I accept his conclusion. Only as one possible conclusion, though. As later on I will try to show, the power of Milton’s text lies in the fact that through a skilful use of pastoral, his poem offers an almost infinite number of interpretations.

The next section of the poem deals with the common memories of *two* shepherds. The actions described here were committed together, and no individual deed of Lycidas appears in the list. Again, the poetic self cannot suspend itself, the perspective offered is fundamentally subjective, which is not quite typical of pastoral texts. However, the next section has more to do with conventionality: Nature’s mourning is described with typical pastoral phraseology. Another conventional section is the poetic question towards the Nymphs: “Where were ye Nymphs when the remorseless deep / clos’d o’re the head of your lov’d Lycidas?” (l. 50-51). Brinkgreve comments on this in the following way: “The eternal reproach of the pastoral elegy is voiced (...)

but it is given a new turn" and she quotes the following lines of the poem: "Ay me, I fondly dream! / Had ye been there ... for what could that have done?" (l. 56-57). In my opinion, this is another problem, a problem that appears even more explicitly in lines 64-65: "Alas! What boots it with uncessant care / to tend the homely slighted shepherd's trade." Here the poetic self questions the authority of poetry, but since this is a pastoral poem and since Milton wrote only one pastoral poem later, I think it is quite possible to feel some extent of anti-pastorality among these lines. Of course, I do not want to make Milton a proto-hero of environmental protection, the criticism here is not against pastoral's idealised depiction of Nature, but against the unreliable mode itself. It is generally acknowledged that Edward King was "no more than a distant acquaintance of Milton" (Brinkgreve 1990, 529), and the fact that the poetic self in *Lycidas* questions the meaning of poetry is, I think, caused by the poetic self's realisation of the misleading nature of pastoral. Edward King is only a distant acquaintance, but if one "pastoralises" the fact carefully, then he can make a martyr, or at least a great poet from him. If we accept Gifford's statement that pastoral is a discourse, then Milton seems to call attention to the fact that it is a discourse of deception. This is a consequence of the pastoral's "masquerade" (Brinkgreve) or "carvinalesque" (Gifford) nature, and it seems to me that Milton had already realised this problem.

Another problematic point of the poem is the address to the Muses of pastoral in ll. 85-87. The locus may be referring to the question of decorum, which, according to Brinkgreve, was a vulnerable point of bucolic poetry (Brinkgreve 1990, 368-371). The use of delicate language in pastoral poetry had to be defended by such statements like "noble persons are staying in the country" (Scaliger quoted by Brinkgreve 1990, 371). Before these lines, the poetic self (and not *Lycidas*!) was addressed by Phoebus, god of poetry, and the muses of Theocritan (Mincius) and Virgilian (Arethuse) pastoral seem to have been muted till the time the divine figure spoke. Another example of the same problem is found in lines 133-134: "Return Alpheus, the dread voice is past, / That shrunk thy streams; Return Sicilian Muse." Again the two Muses seem to have been "sent away" till St. Peter delivered his speech against the corrupted clergy. In these cases, the pastoral framework is explicitly left behind. If we accept that pastoral is a masquerade, then here the poem offers a view behind the scenes.

For the present examination, one more important part is left in the poem, and that is the ending. Here a completely new framework is revealed. We see the narrator of the previous two hundred lines from a weird, surprising external point of view. This, I think, can easily be interpreted as the closing of an era and the beginning of a new one, although Brinkgreve tries to deny this. She argues that Milton wrote pastoral after *Lycidas*, however, we should

remember that there is only one pastoral poem of Milton after Lycidas. With this one exception, he never returned to the mode, and this can explain a lot of problematic points of the poem. This ending, the sending away of the Muses two times, the imperfect pastuality of the poem can lead us to the conclusion that in this poem, Milton is exploring the boundaries of the pastoral mode. And returning now to the epigraph, we must take a look at the meaning of the 'monody' term. As Evans states: "The term derives ... from Greek tragedy, where it means an ode sung by a single character" (Evans 1989, 50). The fact that the pretext promises a solo kind of song, but the ending of the poem introduces another soloist (not to talk about the problem of the narrator or narrators in the main text of the poem), making anything but a solo from the poem, is a significantly ironic device from Milton, in my opinion again referring to the deceptive potential of pastoral.

As a conclusion about the poem's use of pastoral, I think that Milton's poem proved to be an "unclear" pastoral poem. There are anti-pastoral tendencies in it, but it does not explicitly deny the legitimacy of the genre. With the shifting of the Muses, with the imitation of Virgil, with the questioning of the meaning of (pastoral) poetry, but especially with the last eight lines offering an outward perspective to the whole poem, Lycidas, is – I think – a meta-pastoral work of art. It is continuously exploring the limits of the mode, and always seems to reflect on itself, and through itself on the whole of pastoral poetry. The pretext and the last eight lines offer a framework for the poem, however, as both are in a sense outside the poem (the pretext links the poem to external entities – Church, the last lines feature the poet of the poem), they are further strengthening the poem's self-descriptive nature. Thus Milton leaves his poem open, and that may be why it is always possible to find newer and newer interpretations, which differ in accordance with the way the reader chooses to close the poem, or to explain the openness of it.

#### **IV. *Lycidas* – second attempt**

In fact, the second attempt at reading the poem will be an experiment with a critical approach that has been emerging since the 1990s, namely ecocriticism. First, I will briefly introduce this critical school, and then I will search for arguments supporting the use of this approach in connection with Milton's text. The in progress nature of ecocriticism is often emphasised by writers, for example, in this way by Lawrence Buell:

Right now, as I see it, environmental criticism is in the tense but enviable position of being a wide-open movement still sorting out its premises and its powers (Buell 2005, 28).

Nevertheless, there are exact definitions, for example, the New Critical Idiom volume on ecocriticism offers an explanation following Cheryll Glotfelty, a pioneer of the ecocritical movement:

What then *is* ecocriticism? Simply put, ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment (Glotfelty quoted by Garrard 2005, 3.)

The only problem is that there are many other possible definitions. A bunch of these is accessible on the webpage of the ASLE (The Association for the Study of Literature and Environment), an American association which, according to Garrard, dominates ecocriticism today (Garrard 2005, 4). This time I do not undertake the task of summarising these position papers, but the yet-emerging nature of the concept must be kept in mind.

It is important to note that behind the whole movement there is the presupposed state of environmental crisis. Most ecocritics (at least the writers of the mentioned position papers) seem to take this for granted, but Garrard is careful concerning the matter, saying that "We will have reason to question the monolithic conception of 'environmental crisis' implied here [in another definition of ecocriticism] ..." (Garrard 2005, 4).

Here I have to make it clear that as a reader of *Lycidas*, it is not at all in my mind to try and decide this question. I think that it is almost irrelevant from the present perspective, whether there is or there is not such thing as environmental crisis. What is important is that there is a discussion going about this, appearing everywhere. So I think that for the present-day reader the discourse about environmental crisis is an inevitable cultural context, surrounding him or her from all directions (books, movies, media). In a sense, a similar effect may be in the background of the quotation by the mentioned medical scientist. He, as a researcher on mad cow disease, is probably surrounded by papers, facts, books etc. on the mad cow disease. This is an inevitable context for him, therefore when he gets to read *Lycidas*, he does it from this context, which drives him to read bovine spongiform encephalopathy into the poem, although it was not necessarily on Milton's mind. My supposition is that when we read Milton's poem today, we are doing it from a context that is overloaded with the elements of a discourse about environmental crisis. As Lawrence Buell writes in his book (which seems more questioning in nature than Garrard's book): "... during the last



third of the twentieth century 'the environment' became front-page news" (Buell 2005, 4).

At this point, when I am searching for arguments supporting an ecocritical consideration of *Lycidas*, it seems promising to take a look at the methodology applied in Garrard's book. In the first chapter (*Beginning: Pollution*) he introduces his method: "I will be reading culture as rhetoric, although not in the strict sense understood by rhetoricians, but as the production, reproduction and transformation of large-scale metaphors" (Garrard 2005, 7), under which he understands the following: pollution, pastoral, wilderness, apocalypse, dwelling, animals, Earth.

It is easy to see that at least two of the metaphors examined by Garrard are present in *Lycidas* as well: the pastoral and the apocalyptic. This suggests that there should be space for an ecocritical evaluation of the poem. But there are other grounds for such an evaluation, too. One of the early key texts of ecocriticism is Carolyn Merchant's *The Death of Nature* (Merchant 1980). This book is based on the idea that the root of environmental crisis is the shift from an organic to a mechanistic view of nature, the cause of which was the Scientific Revolution. Now, thinking of Milton, it is obvious that he lived in the middle of this change, being a contemporary of Samuel Hartlib, an emblematic figure of the Scientific Revolution (as it is clear from Milton's tract *On Education*, recommended to Hartlib). And this is the first point, where we can use an ecocritical approach.

Evans writes in connection with the last eight lines that "The course of Milton's life ... is about to undergo a drastic change" (Evans 1989, 52). Of course, this is related to Milton's life, but looking at a more general scale, we may regard it as a sign of the general change mentioned by Merchant. The change from the organic to a mechanistic view of nature also appears on the level of words. As an opposition to the many words in connection with nature (laurels, season, wind, rose etc.) there is a very harsh contrast in line 131-132: "But that two-handed engine at the door / Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more." The word 'engine' is clearly linked to the mechanistic view of Nature, especially if we note that according to the Oxford English Dictionary (entry *engine*, meaning 7.a.), the usage of the word in the sense of machine dates exactly to the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century.

The consideration of this shift in world-view sheds new light on the use of pastoral, too. Merchant writes about the pastoral: "The pastoral had been an antidote to the ills of urbanization in ancient times, and it continued to play that role in the commercial revolution" (Merchant 1980, 20). If we juxtapose the supposition that the poem includes a criticism of pastoral questioning the authority of poetry and Carolyn's concept of the shift from organic to mechanic, then the poem may be read as a failing antidote, one which is not



capable of offering a shelter from a reality that is changing in a less desirable way.

Switching back to the metaphors examined by Garrard, his chapter on pastoral strongly relies on Gifford, and says nothing about *Lycidas*, therefore it cannot be used in the ecocritical evaluation of the poem above the extent of the preceding paragraph based on Carolyn's pastoral definition. As for the apocalyptic tradition, I took a more detailed view at it in a previous version of this paper. The idea was mainly based on a reading of the poem focused on the following lines (l. 173-174): "So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high, / Through the dear might of Him that walked the waves." Through an examination of the apocalyptic tradition, I read the poem as a promise for the coming of the Millennium, where everyone following the example of Lycidas (of course, not in drowning, but in leading an ethical life) will receive the harmony of heaven. Now, the notion of apocalypse is not so different in the ecocritical discourse. As Garrard writes, "Yet arguably very similar [to the apocalyptic rhetoric of people ranging from Judaeo-Christian believers to Muslim Mahdists] rhetorical strategies have provided the green movement with some of its most striking successes" (Garrard 2005, 85). Unfortunately, I do not feel that the hidden apocalyptic tendencies in *Lycidas* can be directly put in the discourse of environmental apocalypse. But there is some, if more indirect, connection. The time of the writing of *Lycidas*, right before the English Revolution, witnessed a serious religious crisis. With the coming of the Civil War, this was complemented by a political crisis. A crisis necessarily leads to the use of apocalyptic rhetoric. So if today we are using green apocalyptic rhetoric, it implies that there is a crisis today. In Milton's time the apocalyptic rhetoric could not stop the crisis, the Civil War broke out. But right before that time, no one knew that war would be the consequence. Now the question is: what if the green apocalyptic rhetoric proves to be ineffective in solving the implied crisis?

Besides, in an ecocritical evaluation it is quite obvious to examine the way nature is represented in the poem. Pastoral texts seem at first sight quite straightforward from this aspect, the rural/nature – urban/civilised opposition being one of their basic components. However, we must not forget about the conventionality and the (sometimes) anti-realistic tendency of the mode. In *Lycidas*, there are important questions raised in this regard.

The first part (from line 1 to line 49) delivers the conventional pastoral depiction of nature, offering a harmonious setting as the background for the retrospective about the happy times when Lycidas was still alive. On the other hand, the beginning of the poem (the "fingers rude" that shatter the leaves) cannot be fitted into this picture. Thus, harmony is brutally disturbed (this word itself can be found in l. 7). In Frye's study, there is a list of the frameworks

of ideas that can be found in *Lycidas*. He differentiates 4 such frameworks: order of Christianity, order of human nature, order of physical nature and the disorder of the unnatural ("the sin and death and corruption that entered the world with the fall" (Frye 1984, 208)). If we accept this categorisation, we can say that the first lines pre-project the fourth type, whereas the retrospective part reveals the second and the third framework (human/physical nature), and the second half of the poem reveals the Christian order (from l. 50 to the resolution by Christ).

In connection with the organic order Merchant claims in an ecofeminist strain that "Central to the organic theory was the identification of nature, especially the earth, with a nurturing mother: a kindly beneficent female who provided for the needs of mankind in an ordered, planned universe" (Merchant 1980, 2). I think that it is obvious that this ideology stands behind the retrospective passage's handling of nature. On the other hand, it is very important that 'mishap' comes into the picture in l. 92., especially in its context, where blind fury was already mentioned ("Comes the blind Fury with the abhorred shears, / And slits the thin-spun life." line 75-76). So it seems that the harmony of nature is questioned, but the question seems illegitimate and the text seems to redirect responsibility from nature to uncontrollable factors like fury and mishap. And after this restitution of nature's authority, there is a long enumeration of different kind of flowers that should "strew the laureate hearse where Lycid lies" (line 152), so harmony seems to get recovered. Although a harmonious depiction of water in a poem written about someone who drowns is quite problematic, I think the task is fulfilled in the poem, especially in lines 166-178, where water is paralleled with the "ocean bed" beneath which the "day-star" sinks – not for eternal disappearance but for temporary hiding before a new beginning. And this new beginning is, of course, provided by Jesus Christ. This means that the ending of the poem offers a complete restoration of the organic order and of the way of Christian life. The last eight lines reinforce this restoration with a coherent, undisturbed view of nature.

As quoted by Samuel I. Mintz, Douglas Bush claims that "In 1600, the educated Englishman's mind and world were more than half medieval; by 1660 they were more than half modern" (Mintz 1980, 138). I think *Lycidas* is an excellent example of this transition in thought. The shift in thinking (from medieval to modern, or from organic to mechanic) can be beautifully traced in the poem, and I think that there is an interesting duality: on one hand, pastoral as a mode seems to be rejected, but the organic view of nature is reinforced.

## V. Conclusion

My aim was two- or three-fold with this paper. After an exploration of the use of pastoral, I tried to perform a reading from an ecocritical approach. This was not done with the sole objective of understanding the poem – I also tried to understand (and to test) ecocriticism as such.

As for the pastoral side of the coin, my conclusion could be summed up in the following way: *Lycidas* is a pastoral text, but opposing to its predecessors (to give but one example, Spenser's *Astrophel*), it does not use the pastoral framework coherently. The poem leaves the framework in a surprising manner, especially with the pretext and the finishing eight lines. This meta-aspect means that the text, in a sense, reads itself, and seems to be dissatisfied with its own pastoral nature, which is well illustrated by the fact that except for one poem, Milton did not write any more (strictly) pastoral texts later.

However, I think the most important result of my paper is the proof that ecocriticism can provide a valid methodology for the reading of the poem, and I think it can be seen that this approach offers new insights into texts. The turning point nature was already highlighted about the poem (see Evans), but the ecocritical reading proved that besides a personal turning point, a change of thinking on a more general level is also present in the poem (organic – mechanic shift). This ecocritical reading was an experiment, and I hope its results prove convincing. Consequently, I think that the question of the quotation by the medical scientist can be explained in this way: the discourse about environmental crisis/different environmental issues is such an important context today that it simply cannot be neglected by present-day readers. And the real power of ecocriticism lies in the way it offers a methodology to perform investigations from this context and of this context at the same time.

## References

Here it should be noted that this TDK paper was later developed into a significantly more detailed MA thesis, in which the biggest omission – the complete absence of the extensive scholarly literature on Milton in general and *Lycidas* in particular – had been at least partially amended. In this earlier form, the paper fails to reflect on this literature (neither is it its purpose), a distortion the reader should constantly keep in mind.

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# Testing the New Historiography of Alchemy: the Case of Kenelm Digby

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## Abstract

In the last two decades, a new framework for the study of alchemy, challenging the older Jungian views, has been taking shape by the efforts of two American historians of science, Lawrence Principe and William Newman. The present paper intends to test this new framework through a case study of a 17<sup>th</sup> century English natural philosopher named Kenelm Digby. In the light of my results, the new metanarrative of alchemy draws a false picture of the discipline, as alchemy was a complex philosophical system with its own religious and cultural connotations.

**Keywords:** Alchemy, Kenelm Digby, Scientific Revolution, New Historiography of Alchemy, Natural Philosophy

## Introduction

By looking at the contemporary literature of the history of science, there now seems to be a revival of scholarly interest towards alchemy (e.g. Moran 2005; Newman 2004). One may ask why this newfound attention towards this long neglected field of study? Science, after all, is rational and ordered in contrast to alchemy which is irrational and disorderly.

There are numerous possible answers for this question. From the perspective of popular culture, the fashionable nature of the topic is obvious. From the perspective of the historian of science, the reason is practical: a meticulous

study of the social and cultural environment will yield a more detailed picture on science of earlier periods. But a more plausible reason for the revival of interest can be found in the successful linkage of some of the most prominent figures of early modern science to alchemy. The works of Dobbs and Westfall on Newton's alchemical experiments took the question of alchemy into serious consideration and did not sweep it aside as the youthful folly of the natural philosopher (cf.: Dobbs 1975; Dobbs 1991; Westfall 1983). In fact Dobbs even suggested that Newton might have used alchemy as a scientific explanatory tool, a way to understand nature better. Dobbs' work shed light on the importance of alchemy and as a result, scholars slowly started to reveal the alchemical dimensions of other great natural philosophers including Robert Boyle and John Locke (On the alchemy of Boyle see: Principe 1998).

The result of these new biographical studies showed that the study of the history of alchemy is not an option but a must as it is deeply intertwined with the formation of new scientific ideas. Finally, alchemy received the necessary scholarly recognition and the reinterpretation of early modern science has begun.

This shift in the scholarly approach, however, was not enough, as the study of alchemy still lacked a standardized research method, and a proper metanarrative. To solve this problem, Professors William R. Newman and Lawrence M. Principe started to form the theory that Principe has called the "New Historiography of Alchemy" (Principe 2004). This programme originally intended to provide a complex framework for the future case studies of alchemical authors (Principe & Newman 2001). Although they have received positive critiques from some leading authorities on the study of alchemy, such as Allen G. Debus or Nicholas Clulee, and their articles were published in important journals like *Isis* and *Ambix*, there were also some objections against certain aspects of their model, namely that it downplays the religious, spiritual and occult dimensions of alchemy. These will be meticulously described and discussed in the next chapter, as the very objective of this paper is to test the model presented by Principe and Newman.

To put the "new historiography of alchemy" to the test I intend to carry out a case study of a 17<sup>th</sup> century English natural philosopher/courtier/ alchemist named Kenelm Digby (1603-1665), within the framework provided by Newman and Principe. With the contextualization of Digby in the intellectual environment of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and with the analysis of some of his alchemical works I have a twofold objective: to reconstruct Digby's worldview that could yield some insight into the shifting values in the era of the Scientific Revolution; and to illustrate the deficiencies of the Principe-Newman model of alchemy.

Choosing Digby as the subject of the case study is justified by numerous factors. First, he was a natural philosopher of major importance in his time. Secondly, he was an alchemist who made use of his alchemical readings in his scientific theories. Thirdly, he was a devout Catholic who tried to prove the tenets of his faith with the aforementioned explanatory tools. Religiosity, natural science and alchemical tradition created an organic unity in Digby's mind. The points I have mentioned above make Digby the ideal subject of my case study, as through his wide range of interests I can test the Newman-Principe model of alchemy.

After this brief overview, and justification of my research subject, my paper will start with the delineation of the main tenets of the Newman-Principe model of alchemy and its deficiencies.

## 1. The Principe Newman Thesis of Alchemy

Before we enter into the fields of Digby's alchemical interests, it would be necessary first to clarify what alchemy is. As it will be seen from my approach, 17<sup>th</sup> century alchemy – in my view – was a complex and always changing system of laboratory practice, philosophy and religion that among its various goals aimed at improving nature, perfecting the adept itself and also meant to provide explanations for natural phenomena.

After the scholarly recognition of Newton's alchemical pursuits, the research of alchemy received a strong impetus. Despite the renewed efforts in the research into alchemy, the terminology of the field was a bit hazy and the study of alchemy lacked a good theoretical framework. With the intention of solving this problem, William Newman and Lawrence Principe have made attempts in the last 20 years to standardize the study of alchemy. Their programme began when Newman in the 1980s discovered that the *Summa Perfectionis* written by pseudo-Geber in the 14<sup>th</sup> century already contained the germs of the corpuscular philosophy (cf.: Newman 2006). With his newfound discovery, he insisted on proving direct continuity between alchemy and chemistry.

In a joint article Principe and Newman revisited the theory of continuity from a different angle (Principe & Newman 1998). In the "Alchemy vs. Chemistry: The Etymological Origins of a Historiographical Mistake" the American authors claimed that prior to the last two decades of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, efforts to differentiate alchemy from chemistry are wrong and presentist. "The eventual distancing" –they argue – "of alchemy from chemistry arose from an

etymological mistake" committed by some Paracelsian alchemists (Principe & Newman 1998, 64). The study of Principe and Newman has demonstrated with examples that it was only in the 18<sup>th</sup> century that transmutational alchemy was differentiated from chemistry.

Instead of making a distinction, Principe and Newman proposed the use of the archaically spelt "chymistry" to emphasize that the two disciplines were in fact one before the 1680s. It is true that 17<sup>th</sup> century authors of "chemical" texts used the traditional "alchemical" names to denominate different substances. The subject of my case study was no exception. Alchemists were not exclusively aiming at transmuting gold, some of them made their living by creating dyes or other practical chemicals.

But if someone thinks of Newton's letter of April 26<sup>th</sup> 1676 to Oldenburg, things are seen from a different perspective. In this letter Newton comments on Boyle's frivolity of giving away details of an important alchemical process and scorns him because it was "possibly an inlet of something more noble and not to be communicated without immense damage to the world if there be any verity in the hermetic writers" (Turnbull 1960, 515 in Rattansi 1972, 168). Taking into consideration that the *Philosophical Transactions* since its first volume (1661) published articles on biology, metallurgy and chemical experiments using the traditional alchemical notions, it is clear that there existed a huge difference between a secretive kind of chymistry and vulgar chymistry.

It will be shown later that the rise of mechanical philosophy irrefutably brought simpler methods of argumentation into chemical explanations, which soon became a distinctive factor between alchemy and chemistry. Thus the origin of the alchemy/chemistry dichotomy is not just an etymological problem but also a historical one.

By applying the term "chymistry" and by representing it as the direct ancestor of chemistry Principe and Newman aimed at showing that alchemy was mainly a technical activity at that time. By doing that they are presenting only one side of alchemy and they are trying to downplay its links with both the spiritual and occult traditions. They argue that alchemy received its strong spiritual dimension in the 19<sup>th</sup> century during the Victorian occultist revival, and that the alchemy of the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century was much more practical. They criticised the Jungian understanding of alchemy, in which the alchemists were less concerned with the chemical reactions than with psychic states taking place within the practitioner (Principe & Newman 1998, 402). Jung's interpretation gives the definition for spiritual alchemy whose original goal is to better the alchemist itself. Newman and Principe are very right to dismiss those who see alchemy as solely spiritual discipline whose exclusive goal was to perfect the adept itself (Principe & Newman 2004, x.). It would be next to



useless to refute this statement as alchemy truly was not a monolithic entity. Even so it is hard to believe that any professional scholar of alchemy in 1998, the time of the study's publication, believed that alchemy was solely a spiritual endeavour. Therefore their statement seems somewhat unnecessary. And if the intention of Newman and Principe was to prove that spiritual alchemy as such was a marginal phenomenon, however, then they were mistaken.

Already in the 4th century Zosimos of Panopolis established a homology between the transformation of metals and the human operator (Newman 2004, 29-31). Among other proponents of the so called spiritual alchemy we can mention 14<sup>th</sup> century alchemist Petrus Bonus of Ferrara or the English John Dee from the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Szönyi 1998, 207-217). Moreover, in the light of the newest findings it seems that Robert Boyle's alchemical quest was influenced by John Dee's spiritual alchemy and angelic magic (*Robert Boyle's Dialogue on the Converse with Angels Aided by the Philosophers Stone* in Principe, 1998). Knowing these facts it seems fair to conclude that spiritual alchemy was anything but marginal throughout the last two millennia.

The last thing I want to touch upon is the religiosity of alchemy. Newman in his recent book titled *Promethean Ambitions* suggests that alchemy acquired its religious character only in the 14<sup>th</sup> century (Newman 2004, 83). In the 1320s Pope John XXII issued a condemnation of alchemy that labelled alchemists as simple counterfeiters. In Newman's opinion this was the main reason why the practitioners of the art started to cloak their discipline in religious language. There are three major problems with this concept. First we know several alchemists from the Middle Ages – the aforementioned Zosimos of Panopolis is one of them – who used overtly religious motifs in their writings. Secondly, Newman seriously underestimated the alchemists – it is hard to imagine that alchemists were stupid enough to risk the possibility of being labelled as heretic, by using religious phrases. And finally, the religious nature of alchemy was more than just a disguise, because, for instance, Digby's alchemical philosophical system was built around the fundamentals of devout religiosity.

The initial criticism I unfolded in this part should serve to outline my approach in the next parts of my paper. After the necessary contextualization of Digby's life and his natural philosophy in the intellectual environment of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, I will move on to discuss Digby's alchemy in particular. In the subsequent parts will analyse Digby's works and will deliver my main criticism of the Principe-Newman thesis. Whereas I do not intend to reflect directly on their theory of continuity, I propose to carry out a more exhaustive analysis on their views concerning the dichotomy between alchemy and chemistry. In my view such dichotomy was already existent around the 1650s I will support my arguments with the analysis of Digby's work titled

*Of the Sympathetic Powder*. As Kenelm Digby was not a representative of spiritual alchemy in the strictest sense –although he seemed to understand the neoplatonic interpretation of alchemy (Szönyi 1998, 265-273) – I wish to visit that issue only tangentially. On the other hand, I intend to discuss the question of alchemy’s religious nature. My impression is that Digby’s whole structure of scientific and alchemical endeavours was constructed around a solid fundament of Catholic faith. Therefore, in his case, religiosity as a disguise cannot come into mind as an option. To underpin my argument I will use Digby’s work titled *The Vegetation of Plants*. The paper will conclude with the discussion of Digby’s effect on posterity using a manuscript from the Ashmolean Collection in the Bodleian Library, which, to the best of my knowledge, has never been referred to before (Bodleian Library, Ashmolean Collection, 788, Fol. 185-7, “of the Powder of Sympathy” in a letter to “R.W. J.”).

During my work I made extensive use of Betty Dobbs’ articles on Kenelm Digby. Dobbs’ three articles that were published in the *Ambix* journal give important information on Digby’s natural philosophy and alchemy. Also these three will serve as the preliminary information upon which I will construct my own argument (Dobbs 1971; Dobbs 1973; Dobbs 1974). On Digby’s alchemy and religiosity I consulted an article by Bruce Janacek (Janacek 2000). His findings helped me to develop my views concerning Digby’s Catholicism.

## 2. Digby’s Life and His Role in the Rise of Natural Sciences

Kenelm Digby was born in 1603. Son to Everard Digby, the executed catholic conspirator, he was raised to be a Catholic. Although he joined the Church of England in order to build his career, he remained loyal to his original Catholic faith. He studied at Gloucester Hall, Oxford under the guidance of Thomas Allen, a humanist with Roman Catholic sympathies (Foster 2004; on English Catholicism in Oxford see: Foster 1981). Digby was an exceptional student, Allen referred to him as the *Mirandola* of his Age (Dobbs 1973, 145).

After his university studies he made a grand tour around Europe. During his travels Digby developed a really colourful personality; he was equally welcome at courts, in laboratories and the meetings of learned societies on both sides of the English Channel (Dobbs 1971, 2). This sociability and excellent interpersonal skills were important qualities that provisioned the nature of his scientific career.

In 1633, after the death of his wife Venetia, Digby removed himself from social life, and as John Aubrey writes in his *Brief Lives*: “he retired into Gresham-colledge at London where he diverted himselfe with his Chymistry and the Professors` good conversation” (Foster 2004). While at Gresham College along with his alchemical experiments guided by the Hungarian alchemist János Bánfihunyadi, he looked at phenomena of lodestones, magnetism, reflection and refraction, also he made an enquiry into the circulatory system and he formed the basis for his later work, the *Two Treatises* (Foster 2004; on Bánfihunyadi see: Appleby 2004).

Although Gresham College was a good place to start his quest for knowledge, Paris was the capital of northern European culture and soon it became Digby’s destination. There Gallican Roman Catholicism allowed scientist and natural philosophers to exchange ideas in freedom. Digby by this time had serious doubts about the validity of Anglican doctrines, and decided to convert to Catholicism. In 1635 he arrived in Paris and took up his residence near the University of Sorbonne and the royal chemistry laboratory.

During his time in Paris, Digby became associated with the so-called Newcastle Circle, a group of English mechanical philosophers composed of Thomas Hobbes, Charles Cavendish, William Cavendish and John Pell. The group hoped that by using the principles of natural philosophy, some universal truths on the nature of God could be clarified (Janacek 2000, 97).

At the same time along with the English exiles, Digby met virtually all of the most important proponents of the new mechanical philosophy like René Descartes (1596-1650), Pierre Gassendi (1592-1655) and Marin Mersenne (1588-1648) and discussed its subtleties with them. Later, when he returned to England he remained in active correspondence with the French philosophers, an act that was to become highly profitable for the later Royal Society. Digby adopted the atomist and mechanical ideas of the aforementioned philosophers, but instead of using them to create a completely new philosophical system, he tried to integrate them into the Aristotelian framework.

In this sense Digby was a bit of an ancient-modern go-between: he always viewed mechanical philosophy as inferior to theology. This outlook is reflected in all of his works.

His diverse fields of study included astronomy, matter theory and biology. While he reflected on almost all problems that were current in his time, not many have ever suggested that he was an important thinker of the Scientific Revolution and it is not the intent here either. He was rather the man “who knew everyone and who took an interest in every advance” (Dobbs 1971, 2). The huge number of his acquaintances and correspondents served the Royal Society very well when Digby joined in 1660. This mediator role granted Digby the scholarly recognition. What he lacked in the study of natural sciences, he

made up for with extremely good reputation. His social recognition and of course his new views granted him that his works were widely read, even at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century by as prominent thinkers as Isaac Newton himself.

In the light of this account it can be concluded that Digby – although his works were not significant contributions to natural science – was as an important character of the Scientific Revolution who played an important role in shaping the intellectual life of the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. This argument legitimizes my research, as at that time Digby's works were considered as mainstream natural philosophy and not just a marginal anomaly.

### 3. Alchemy and Chemistry in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century and Digby's Alchemy

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century alchemy was a truly heterogeneous discipline. Although it is almost impossible to logically classify its different traditions, we should try to differentiate at least two different threads in alchemy. The original tradition, although it had its spiritual ramifications, was not the huge philosophical system as it was to become later. Pseudo-Roger Bacon's *Breve Breviarium* points out that all metals are made of the same elements, namely mercury and sulphur. The aim of the alchemist is mainly the transmutation of metals (Newman 2004, 67).

The overall picture of alchemy has changed, however, with the totalizing model of Paracelsus (1493-1541). He suggested that not just the metals, but the whole world was made of three principles: mercury, sulphur and salt (the *tria prima*). Paracelsus' theory was aiming at providing a total explanation for the world, and alchemy transformed into an entire philosophical system. He also emphasized the iatrochemical or medicine making dimension of alchemy. Under the influence of the paracelsian doctrine of the *tria prima*, whole chemical philosophies were formed, and alchemy started to gradually become an explanation for natural phenomena.

Almost a century before the establishment of the Royal Society, alchemical circles were formed around Europe with the intention of propagating alchemical knowledge. In England the so called Hartlib Circle was the most prominent. The Hartlib Circle worked almost like a scientific institution at that time, in a way it can be viewed as one of the forerunners of the Royal Society (Sheffield, HROnline, 2002). They collected everything that was in connection with alchemy and chemistry, clear and practical recipes for dyes or obscure descriptions for Philosopher's Stone were equally present

among the hand-copied archives of the group. The existence of groups such as Hartlib's was crucial as chemistry as a discipline was not taught officially at universities. In fact chemistry was not considered a science at all in the Aristotelian framework of sciences.

Although it was not part of the university curriculum it is very likely that Digby's alchemical endeavours can be attributed to some extent to his most favoured tutor Thomas Allen. Allen was a curious figure: he was known for his occult interests, and among his former pupils we can find Philip Sydney and Robert Fludd. Although there is not much known on his particular views on alchemy (unfortunately only a commentary on Ptolemaius survived), his paracelsian outlook could be deduced from his books that he bequeathed to Digby.

The true beginning of Digby's alchemical work, can be dated back to his stay at Gresham College. There Digby worked with the Transylvanian János Bánfihunyadi (Dobbs 1973, 148). It is fairly well known from Digby's letters and writings that Digby and Bánfihunyadi were mainly concerned with the paracelsian model of alchemy. As it was mentioned before, the alchemy of Paracelsus also tried to describe the world in its alchemical terms. Digby's oeuvre spectacularly exemplifies this.

Digby's self imposed exile in France was a serious turning point in his natural philosophy and alchemy alike. The mechanical philosophy he adapted from the French philosophers transformed his views fundamentally. Although he preserved the Catholic Aristotelian framework of his knowledge, he started to give mechanical explanations for natural and supernatural phenomena. Accordingly, Digby's alchemy became different from the original paracelsian one: it started to become a science. In the next two sections I will elucidate this through the example of Digby's *On the Sympathetic Powder*, and *On The Vegetation of Plants*.

## 4. The Sympathetic Powder

Digby's sympathetic powder was just a variation of the popular paracelsian 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century weapon salve treatment for wounds. The weapon salve was a perfect example of the use of alchemy in the realm of pharmacy. In all treatments of the weapon-salve type, the medication was placed on the weapon or on an old bandage and the wound itself was simply washed. Considering the nature of other sixteenth and seventeenth century medications, cleaning the wound might have been more effective.

Digby's account of the use of the powder was almost similar, when he told his story to an assembly of doctors in Montpellier in 1658 (Digby 1669). Digby began with stating that he was a propagator of this medicine as far as the Western world was concerned. The powder became famous when it was used by Digby to cure the wound of James Howell by soaking an old bandage in a solution of this powder (op. cit., 150). Digby's powder met almost unanimous popularity and he was no less celebrated for it than William Harvey had been for his study on blood circulation (Gilman 1999, 265).

Digby's powder might be curious from the view of the contemporary reader to say the least, but it would not be fair to connect Digby entirely with the remnants of Renaissance natural magic: one has to see the huge stride Digby made to remove it from the realm of the occult.

Much of the received natural philosophy in the early seventeenth century, either Aristotelian or Renaissance Hermetic, discussed relationships, the causes of which were unknown. After the fact of the relationship between two things were established, the Aristotelian view provided casual explanation with "occult qualities", and the hermetic view with "hidden sympathies" –the two were practically the same (Dobbs 1971, 10). The reason for the relationship was not sought at all, as it was provided on experimental basis. Digby did not reject the fact of such relationships; he was just opposed to the explanatory strategies of Aristotelianism and Hermeticism. He vehemently objected to the use of the principles of sympathetic magic or occult qualities:

They would have us take for ready money some terms, which we understand not, nor know what they signifie. They would pay us with conveniences, with resemblances, with Sympathies, with Magnetical virtues, and such terms, without explicating what these terms mean (Digby 1669, 152).

Instead of resorting to occult qualities or hidden sympathies, Digby used the mechanical philosophy he acquired in France, to explain causal relationships. This was something that never had happened before, and in my view, transformed alchemy into something else.

In its original context the sympathetic powder acted through occult qualities and hidden sympathies, Digby on the other hand employed mechanical causes of matter and motion to explain its function. Digby's explanation was a carefully built logical construction based on the Cartesian Vortex theory that postulated that space was filled with matter and everything whirled around the Sun.

Digby constructed the following argument: first the Sun attracts and removes the blood atoms from the blood covered bandage, and the atoms

of the powder being incorporated in the blood are also leaving the bandage. Secondly, the heat of the inflamed wound attracts the blood atoms forcefully because the blood in the wound and the blood previously on the bandage are of the same nature. Thirdly the blood atoms mingled with the healing powder enters into the wound and the powder takes effect. The powder is working better at a distance because the blood atoms with the medicament are re-entering their natural beds (Digby 1669, 154).

From the preceding example it can be easily seen that Digby was attempting to explain a causal relationship in a way that was consonant with his mechanical universe. With this he managed to remove the paracelsian weapon-salve from the realm of the occult (Dobbs 1971, 13). Although Digby's theory was based on a non-existing phenomenon, no one could argue against the fact that with his explanation he was trying to rationalize alchemy. With the emergence of mechanistic philosophy in the realm of alchemy, a fundamental change started to take shape, which eventually transformed alchemy –or chymistry– into chemistry. Following this line of reasoning it seems fair to conclude that well before 1680, as Newman and Principe suggested, a large chasm started to open between alchemy and chemistry.

## 5. The Vegetation of Plants

Digby's paper, titled *A Discourse Concerning the Vegetation of Plants* was the first formal publication authorized by the Royal Society (Foster 2004). It described detailed observations and experiments on vegetation. In a similar manner to the Sympathetic Powder, Digby resorted to alchemical language and the Cartesian mechanistic philosophy to describe a phenomenon which in this case was the vegetation of plants (Janacek 2000, 107).

In the age of Digby the processes of vegetation, germination in particular were cosmic events. The creation of life was exclusively attributed to God, therefore vegetation had important corollaries in religion. Still Digby believed that there was nothing mysterious about it, as it was comprehensible by natural means, with the use of alchemical notions. After describing the process of vegetation, however, Digby started to discuss a topic that had even stronger theological implications, namely the revivification of dead plants, practically the act resurrection.

Digby mentions an occasion on which he and Bánfihunyadi managed to resurrect dead plants with his process (Digby 1661, 77-78). Resurrection of



plants was one thing, but Digby had more grandiose aims in mind as the following quotation demonstrates:

This Universall Spirit then being Homogeneall to all things, and being in effect the Spirit of Life, not onely to Plants, but to Animals also: were it not worth the labour to render it as usefull to mens bodyes, as to the reparations of Plants (Digby 1661, 71)?

It seems that Digby intended to use the method of Palingenesis to resurrect the dead. Drawing on the works of earlier alchemical authors such as pseudo-Albertus Magnus, he presumed the existence of a material that could grant life everlasting:

*Albertus Magnus* purchased the reputation of a Magician, for making all sorts of Fruit grow plentifully and perfectly, in the depth of a hard Winter in *Germany*, by meanes of this aethereall balsome. If it were made proportionable to mens bodyes, there is no doubt, but it would work alike effect upon them (Janacek 2000, 108).

With this “aethereall balsome” Digby intended to resurrect the dead which was exclusively in God’s power. In Digby’s case this could imply two things: either the meta-religious (redemptive) function of alchemy on several occasions, or the absolute faith in human ingenuity and science to imitate God. Nevertheless, it is absolutely evident that his religiosity was deeply intertwined with his alchemy.

To see universal implications of life and death in vegetation was not unusual in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and Digby was certainly not alone in discussing this issue metaphorically, theologically and literally (Ibid.). The idea of the resurrection of the dead had preoccupied theologians for centuries. Digby, although he was a devout Catholic, was not a theologian, he was a natural philosopher who never truly understood the Baconian advice. He read the Book of Nature and also the Book of the Scripture, but he never separated the two from each other. Thus, the New Testament was not the only source for Digby in the quest for resurrection. He employed his natural philosophy which, in fact, was an amalgamation of mechanical philosophy and alchemy.

The fact that Digby’s work on the vegetation of plants was the first formal publication of the Royal Society could also lead us to an interesting conclusion: there was no sudden rupture between the eclecticism of Digby and the scientific method that was later attributed to the Royal Society.

In the light of the preceding analysis it seems fair to conclude that in Digby’s mind the idea of palingenesis was intimately linked to the Christian dogma



of the resurrection of the body. The connection between alchemy and religion was not just a superficial one as Principe and Newman suggested. Alchemy or “chymistry” acted as an important explanatory tool in science and religion alike. Moreover, it functioned as an indicator of the limits of human ingenuity in Digby’s writings.

## 6. Digby’s Reception

The history of science was not merciful to Kenelm Digby to say the least. Although he was among the eminent philosophers of his time, 300 years later he was referred to as an obscure alchemist by many historians like Marie Boas Hall. What are the decisive factors that in the end classify people rational or irrational? Digby, after all, eliminated occult qualities from alchemy. He was not alone with his alchemical pursuits, yet he became an archetype of the “obscure” pre-Enlightenment period in the eyes of positivist historians of science. It is most likely that his scientific notoriety was established by his use of the sympathetic powder. An item stored in the Ashmolean Collection in the Bodleian Library supports this theory. The letter can be found in Ashmole 788 and is titled “of the powder of sympathy.” The sender is unknown and only the initials of the recipient’s name are known (R.W.J.). The letter was dated in 1660, five years before Digby’s death. It begins with the writer’s statement of his doubts about the validity of the sympathetic powder: “this distance of cure and quick dispatch, I take to be nothing, but an imitation of some poetical faerie mythologia.” (Bodleian Library, Ashmolean Collection, 788, “of the Powder of Sympathy” in a letter to “R.W. J.” fol 185a.) The writer ridicules the sympathetic powder, his position is different from Digby’s view, who in turn never doubted its validity. One might jump to the sudden conclusion that the writer was a young proponent of mechanistic philosophy who, unlike Digby, completely built his knowledge on the new system and discarded its beliefs on the imaginary relationships between the wound and bandage. However, this is not the case as the letter continues in the following manner:

They paraphrase, they periphrase [...], They discourse into us of [...] magnetisme of emanations of effluxions, how that radical activitie streams in semi-immaterial threads of atomes conducted by a Mummial Efflux which is a mere metaphysical chanting, & a French philosophicall blazon (op. cit., fol 185b).

The writer also criticises the Cartesian mechanistic philosophy. What can be concluded from this? It seems that Kenelm Digby and the author of this letter represented different tracks of modernization. While Digby made logical efforts to explain a non-existing relationship between the wound and the blood covered bandage, the writer of this letter simply discarded the relationship. Digby's belief in the cure, and the fact that he made it known, labelled him as a product of the Renaissance, someone who has nothing to do with natural philosophy at all. He was seriously misinterpreted throughout the last 300 years. Although he was not an important thinker of the Scientific Revolution, his figure deserves more attention as his intermediary state between ancient and modern world views provides important cross-sectional views on the development of our science.

## Conclusion

The twofold aim of my paper was to carry out a small case study of Kenelm Digby's alchemy and to revise the "New Historiography of Alchemy" proposed by professors Lawrence Principe and William Newman. I intended to point out that the nature of Digby's alchemy highlights some deficiencies in the Principe-Newman model of alchemy. On the one hand I illustrated that mechanical philosophy that filtered into all natural sciences made the distinction possible between alchemy and chemistry well before Principe and Newman had suggested. Digby used mechanical principles to eliminate the medieval hidden sympathies in causal relationships, and with that he removed part of his alchemy from the realm of the occult. On the other hand I demonstrated that the link between alchemy and religion was not a superficial one. Theology and alchemy were deeply intertwined in Digby's system of thought: he explained the theological notion of resurrection with alchemical principles. My analysis unfortunately supports the much earlier established argument that a successful metanarrative of alchemy is almost impossible. Alchemy was an idiosyncratic discipline and its pursuers cannot be interpreted within only one framework.

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## **PART 2**



# “I look up, I look down” Vertigo In Alfred Hitchcock’s *Rebecca*



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## **Abstract**

The present paper demonstrates that “vertigo” is the central theme at the core of Alfred Hitchcock’s films. Vertiginous obsessions dominate all of his movies. In Hitchcock’s career the decisive moment was 1938, the year when he signed a contract to work in Hollywood. He had to prove that he was able to shoot his movies according to the Hollywood conventions. Although we should bear in mind throughout the argument that Hitchcock was only able to talk absolutely freely about his main theme only after he had become a centrally important figure of the Hollywood studio system, the aim of the paper is to prove that he managed to talk about vertiginous obsessions, his potentially controversial main theme, even in his first Hollywood piece, *Rebecca*.

Keywords: *vertigo, obsession, Hollywood studio conventions, controversy*

## **1. Introduction**

In this paper, I interpret Hitchcock movies from a specific point of view. According to my claim, in each and every Hitchcock movie “vertigo” is the centre of action. “Vertigo” is used throughout the argument in the sense that it is a term with the help of which we can describe vertiginous obsessions. Hitchcock’s movies focus on obsessions: characters desire to achieve something and their desires start to dominate their lives. Desires might lead

characters to a happy ending, as in the Hitchcock romances, or to death and sorrow, as in his anti-romantic pieces.

The film has a special place in Hitchcock's *oeuvre*. *Rebecca* (1940) was his first film shot in the Hollywood studio system. As all the other Hitchcock movies, it deals with "vertigo", but has to do so in a very subtle way as Hitchcock could not risk a clash with the Hollywood conventions so early in his American career. Only after he had become an undisputed central figure of the Hollywood studio system, did Hitchcock have the possibility to fully communicate his major theme to the audience. The concept of "vertigo" stood at the centre of his world view. In 1940, he had to do everything in accordance with Hollywood conventions. Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca* (1938) contained some hints that Max de Winter and his second wife would not be entirely happy at the end of the story. As I will come back to it in my analysis, these hints were the following: Max murdered Rebecca, his first wife and aimed at committing suicide; and, after the fire, which destroyed their ancestral home, Manderley, Max and the second Mrs. de Winter did not manage to free themselves from the shadows of the past. Hitchcock's main task was to eliminate these references from the film to be able to create a movie with a happy ending. I argue that Hitchcock, while adapting to the Hollywood system, managed to get through the message: the couple would not be happy in the end. The failure of romance in *Rebecca* has to do with the fact that the characters are obsessed with the "wrong object": everyone desires "to be a man in Manderley."

I analyze the movie concentrating on the representations of "vertigo." My aim is to show that Hitchcock had a strong personality, that he was able to talk about "his own theme" even when he entered the Hollywood studio system as a newcomer. Of course, only the germs of his favourite theme can be detected in *Rebecca*. With the help of this movie and others up to the end of the 1950's, Hitchcock was able to achieve such a prominent status that he could talk about the issue of "vertigo" explicitly in his last couple of movies.

## 2. Discussion

### 2.1 Hitchcock Goes to Hollywood

Alfred Hitchcock always kept in mind that he made movies for people to entertain them. He was about to introduce his films to as many people as possible. His ideal was to work for an international audience. His dream came



true when in 1938 an American producer, David O. Selznick, offered him a Hollywood contract.

In case of Hitchcock movies a certain desire can be understood under the term vertigo: a desire that gradually starts to dominate the characters' lives. The characters become too obsessed with this desire. Something attracts them but when they think over what the object of their desire is, they are horrified and at the same time repelled by the very same object. As an example of this very unique feeling let us consider the opening sequence of *Rebecca*. At first, the heroine is almost mesmerized when she describes Manderley and her life there. However, after a few minutes, when she turns to the terrible aspects of her life there (i.e. realizes that the real object of her obsession was to take the place of the first Mrs. de Winter and rule the people around her the way Rebecca did), the tone becomes more pessimistic. Correspondingly, the audience is also attracted to the magnificent castle at first. When we comprehend its secrets our first impression is revised: we are repelled by the very same object that attracted us. The objects of our desire attract and repel us. Attraction and repulsion, looking up and looking down-this is the dialectics in which Hitchcock movies should be understood.

At this point, it is beneficial to consider the concept of the Kantian sublime which is a useful aesthetic category helping us understand the concept of 'vertigo.' Kant writes about the sublime in the *Critique of Judgement*. For our purposes, it is enough, at this point, to consider only some characteristics of the sublime. According to Kant,

Sublime is the name given to what is absolutely great. But to be great and to be a magnitude are entirely different concepts (*magnitudo* and *quantitas*). In the same way, to assert without qualification (*simpliciter*) that something is great is quite a different thing from saying that it is absolutely great (absolute, non comparative *magnum*). The latter is what is beyond all comparison great... Moreover, the estimate of things as great or small extends to everything, even to all their qualities. Thus we call even their beauty great or small... If, however, we call anything not alone great, but, without qualification, absolutely, and in every respect (beyond all comparison) great, that is to say, sublime, we soon perceive that for this it is not permissible to seek an appropriate standard outside itself, but merely in itself. It is a greatness comparable to itself alone. Hence it comes that the sublime is not to be looked for in the things of nature, but only in our own ideas. But it must be left to the deduction to show in which of them it resides. The above definition may also be expressed in this way: that is sublime in comparison with which all else is small. Here we readily see that nothing can be given in

nature, no matter how great we may judge it to be, which, regarded in some other relation, may not be degraded to the level of the infinitely little, and nothing so small which in comparison with some still smaller standard may not for our imagination be enlarged to the greatness of a world... since the mind is not simply attracted by the object, but is also alternately repelled thereby, the delight in the sublime does not so much involve positive pleasure as admiration or respect, i. e., merits the name of a negative pleasure. (Kant 1973, 1-5)

In the concept of the sublime we find some characteristics that lead us to the definition of vertigo. Sublime is something that is absolutely (i. e. beyond all comparison) great. It is an overwhelming presence. Moreover, it is something that is created only in our minds: it exists only in our ideas. Its mere presence has the potential to dominate our thinking because of its incomparable greatness and its inconceivable presence. Kant also points out that being struck by such greatness has a double-faced effect on our psyché. On the one hand we admire such magnitude, i. e. we are attracted by it. On the other hand we are also repelled by it at the very same time as we feel powerless and insignificant in the presence of such greatness. This mixture of admiration and repulsion can be the source of immense pleasure. However, in Kant's argument, it is clearly a negative pleasure: something that should not make us happy and still it does.

For the purposes of our argument, it is important not to confuse two concepts: obsession and mania. Mania is explicitly mentioned by Kant as something which is not compatible with the sublime for it is profoundly ridiculous. (Kant 1973, 22) I add to this that mania is "incurable": a maniac would not hesitate between attraction and repulsion but would be totally attracted to the object of desire. Vertiginous obsession, on the other hand, in Hitchcock movies offers the choice between the two. Thus the Hitchcockian vertigo has two distinct parts. It is a mixture of feelings just like the feeling of sublime itself is a two-layered phenomenon. The first part is the construction of the feeling of sublime in the characters' psyche (they are alternately attracted and repelled by something); and the second is their response to this strange feeling, their choice. After unbearable inner, psychological tortures, which nonetheless give them a huge amount of pleasure, Hitchcockian characters may arrive at two different solutions. They either abandon the object as soon as "the whole picture becomes clear for them" (in the romantic pieces/the pieces of "looking up") or they continue to be obsessed with it even if they are aware of the repelling aspects (in the anti-romantic pieces/the pieces of "looking down"). The Kantian mania is clearly the term for the latter: a constant, downward spiraling will be the characters' fate, a state which has

nothing to do with one of the major components of the sublime: repulsion. Repulsion is not part of the anti-romantic pieces as the very essence of the downward movement is attraction to the thing at the bottom.

Selznick commissioned Hitchcock to shoot a movie based on Daphne du Maurier's international bestseller, *Rebecca*. Hitchcock's films are mainly adaptations but they are very much, at times, radically different from the original pieces. In the case of *Rebecca*, this characteristic feature appears to an increased degree: Hitchcock had to go through a test as, obviously, the success or failure of *Rebecca* decided the newcomer's fate in Hollywood. He had to make a movie radically different from the novel as it contained elements ("the hero" as murderer, or the possible lesbian relationship between Rebecca and Mrs. Danvers) that had no place in mainstream Hollywood films of the 1940's.

*Rebecca* focuses on four main characters: three of them are alive (the heroine, Jane; her husband, Max de Winter; and the housekeeper, Mrs. Danvers), but Rebecca, Max's first wife is already dead when the story begins. The novel starts out with a dream narrated by Jane: she is visiting Manderley again. It becomes clear that this is a recurring dream that gives her much sorrow. She describes herself as a ghost gliding across the gate in order to get along the winding path and reach the castle:

Last night I dreamt I went to Manderley again. It seemed that I stood by the iron gate leading to the drive, and for a while I could not enter for the way was barred to me. . . . Then, like all dreamers, I was possessed of a sudden with supernatural powers and passed like a spirit through the barrier before me. (du Maurier 1938, 5)

She is the narrator throughout the book: she constantly reflects on the events actually happening. It is clear that she reveals the tragic story of Manderley well after the fire devastated the castle. However, the reader gets information about the fire only on the very last page. She constantly refers to the fact that returning to Manderley is impossible but does not tell us why. As the story unfolds, we are more and more interested: What happened to Manderley? Why can't they be entirely happy with their new life? - as we feel that something unresolved still stands between her and Max which, seemingly, cannot be overcome. We can read her internal feelings and thoughts, the way the world is constructed in her mind, through pages. The actual story is revealed in flashbacks: we are at a fixed point somewhere (probably, the couple is changing hotel after hotel as if they were escaping from someone or something) and some time (we do not get to know exactly when but obviously after the fire) and Jane recollects her memories about the events leading to the

fire. Moreover, the novel is open-ended exactly because of the uncertainties concerning the present state in the couple's relationship.

Hitchcock shot a seemingly typical classic Hollywood piece, totally in line with the conventions of the studio system. The opening credits show us the Selznick Studios and then Manderley. Soon an inscription appears on screen: "*The Selznick Studio presents its production of Daphne du Maurier's celebrated novel.*" (Hitchcock 1940) The inscription appears on the transitional level that mediates between nonfiction and fiction. As Edward Branigan puts it, it stands outside the film considered as a fiction in talking about what is to follow, i.e. this is an extra-fictional image. (Branigan 1992, 88-89) As David Bordwell writes:

Classical narration usually begins before the action does . . . The classical Hollywood film typically uses the credits sequence to initiate the film's narration . . . In these moments the narration is self-conscious to a high degree . . . (it displays its recognition that it is presenting information to an audience) . . . The title will most probably name or describe the main character . . . Credits' imagery can also establish the space of the upcoming action . . . (Bordwell et al. 1985, 25)



The title indeed names one of the central characters (Rebecca) while the imagery clearly establishes Manderley as the space of action. Moreover, it is obvious that Selznick was about to base the movie's success on the novel's. Hitchcock had the task to make it a blockbuster, do everything in line with the Hollywood conventions and not to risk anything. However, in a delicate way, he managed to talk about vertigo, lesbian desires between Rebecca and Mrs. Danvers and Max as a murderer, as I will point out later.

At first, what is conspicuous is that Hitchcock, in contrast with du Maurier's novel, did not keep the heroine's voice-over throughout the film. Only in the first minutes do we hear her voice. At this point, we do not even know who the speaker is. We have not seen a human character on screen yet. As Seymour Chatman argues, in case of a voice-over "...all that is required is that the voice-over be identifiable as the character's, whose lips do not move" (Chatman

1980, 160). In other words, it is questionable whether we can consider this as a voice-over at all. At this point, we have no idea who is speaking. This way a disturbing presence is introduced in the first few minutes of the film: the presence not of a human being but of a ghost. Hitchcock tries to emphasize the heroine's ghostliness by not showing her, only presenting her voice. The first sequence is in subjective shots. When, in an establishing shot, we are shown the castle itself, Hitchcock manages to represent the heroine's feelings about her ghostliness visually: the subjective shot is kept but the camera slowly moving upwards occupies a position totally impossible in case of humans. It is as if she moved up a bit higher to see Manderley better while speaking about it. The other important feature in the establishing shot is that the castle is divided into two: a devastated and an undamaged part. As it turns out later, the devastated part is the western wing, Rebecca's favorite part of the castle. Jane and Max lived in the eastern wing. Hitchcock tells us visually concretely the reason why the couple cannot go back to the castle: we see the ruined building devastated by fire. However, the couple's territory, the eastern wing is untouched, i.e. the fire, Rebecca's presence could not devastate their future happiness. There is still hope that the couple may lead a life without fears, a careless viewer would think. When turning to the question of vertigo in the film, I explain why the couple will not be able to free itself from the past.



After this very first sequence, the heroine's narrating voice is totally eliminated from the story. This has at least one very important consequence: the heroine does not have the opportunity to reflect on her position. Her feelings and the special way of interpreting the world in her mind are seemingly unimportant.

Clearly, the first sequence is in flashbacks: Jane has a recurring dream about the events that led to her "present condition". Then, all the other scenes show us the events up to the fire. The voice-over never returns: we do not have the chance throughout the film to consider that actually we see a recollection of the past. The most striking feature of the plot is that the couple's "present condition" is not revealed. This has to do with the presence of vertigo in the movie as I argue in the upcoming chapter.

## 2.2 Vertigo

Hitchcock in his well-known interview with French film director, Francois Truffaut, referred to *Rebecca* as an atypical Hitchcock movie. (Truffaut 1996, 73) Clearly, he was not given *carte blanche* to shoot the film in his own style but, still, *Rebecca's* theme is very Hitchcockian. Daphne du Maurier's story concentrates on "vertigo" (the vertiginous obsession with something), a theme typical in case of Hitchcock movies.

Lesley Brill in his book, *The Hitchcock Romance. Love and Irony in Hitchcock's Films* divides Hitchcock movies into two categories: the romantic and the anti-romantic ones. He argues that all Hitchcock films are centered on issues of love, desires and death. In one way or another, a couple is formed and put to test. According to Slavoj Žižek, a couple in Hitchcock films can go through the test in three different ways. In the films of the 1930's, the couple is formed from the outside; they are first thrown together and love will emerge by itself in the relationship. In the 1940s, the couple is happily united, yet the price to be paid for this is the sacrifice of a third person. So the happy ending is always conceived as "a resigned acceptance of bourgeois everyday life". In the films of the third period, every relation of partnership is ultimately doomed to fail or be "void of libidinal content". So, the more we progress from the outside towards the inside, the more a love relation loses its external support, the more it acquires a lethal dimension and is doomed to fail. (Žižek 1992, 9-10) The couple is involved in all kinds of intrigue but, in most of the cases, love triumphs. Brill understands Hitchcock's oeuvre as the site for the struggles between romantic and ironic plots, images and structures. The romantic side in his films makes us believe that a harmonious world can be restored in the end. The ironic images, on the other hand, constantly subvert the romantic (or happy) endings: we feel that the problem is not resolved thoroughly. As Brill points out: the great majority of Hitchcock's films have elements of both romance and irony, with outcomes that usually favor romance (Brill 1988, 200). He identifies the two extreme ends of the spectrum: there are "relatively unalloyed romances" such as *Young and Innocent* and *To Catch a Thief* on one end of it and the most ironic films (*Vertigo* and *Psycho*) that "frustrate and reverse any romantic impulses toward clarity and fulfillment" on the other. According to Brill, confronting and overcoming a destructive past is at the heart of all romances and at the center of the failure of romance in *Vertigo*, *Psycho* and *Rebecca*. In these latter films, an oppressive past infects the protagonists' happiness. (Brill 1988)

Desires are with us all the time; their objects come from the external world. However, when we become obsessed with something, it is always internal. If the object of our desire is something that helps us reach higher spheres

of human existence, obsession is not a problem. However, when we desire the wrong object, something which only pulls us down, problems arise. Symbolically, "looking up and looking down" is the motor of all action in Hitchcock movies. As Brill puts it, "Hitchcock's films can be revealingly grouped according to their dominant vertical directionality, their ratio of downwardness to upwardness." (Brill 1988, 202) "Up" always means that the characters are obsessed with objects that help them reaching higher spheres, which will lead them to happiness. "Down", on the contrary, signifies the movement towards the bottom of the spiral, i.e. darkness. As Brill argues, "Downwardness in Hitchcock's movies is almost always associated with an imagery that suggests infernal regions, the land of the dead." (Brill 1988, 203) In *Rebecca*, Rebecca comes from the land of the dead. In the majority of Hitchcock's films characters look up and down but finally manage to resist the temptations of the downward movement, i.e. the film has a happy ending. In *Rebecca* this is not the case: downward spiraling will be the characters' predominant motion in the end.

### 2.3 Vertigo in *Rebecca*

While the object of obsession in du Maurier's novel is Manderley itself, Hitchcock takes another direction. The characters seem to be more obsessed with the question of 'who dares to be a man?' in Manderley. In Rebecca's life, it seems, she was the dominating force in Manderley. She had a charismatic personality and was able to make the others accept her prominent position. After Rebecca's death three possible candidates emerge for the position of a new leader of Manderley: Max, Jane and Mrs. Danvers. All of them have a special relationship with Rebecca: Mrs. Danvers adores her and is about to keep up the old ways, Rebecca's ways in Manderley; Jane as a Gothic heroine finds the dead wife's constant presence both frightening and magnificent; and Max hates his former wife, (he even killed her) and spends his life, basically, trying to overcome her memory.

The novel deals a lot with the appearance and reappearance of the monogram "R" as well but in the film the letter "R" is overwhelmingly present everywhere in the castle. It pops up once on a letter in Rebecca's room then in the hut on the seaside or on the pillows: everywhere. It slowly turns out that Rebecca could not function as a partner for Max in keeping up the old ways in Manderley. After the discovery of her body in the sea, Max confesses everything to Jane: Rebecca and he got a special contract after Rebecca had told him her secrets. Neither the book, nor the novel discusses the exact nature of Rebecca's secrets. Du Maurier reinforces the idea that she led an immoral life: often left Max alone in the castle and held wild parties in her London flat.



Hitchcock is on the contrary silent on this issue: Max simply calls Rebecca a bad woman. However, on a subtextual level, we suspect that Rebecca did not fit into the aristocratic world of the de Winters' because she did not have socially accepted sexual desires. She might have been lesbian or bisexual. We cannot be absolutely sure that she was lesbian because it is only her suspected sexual partner, Mrs. Danvers who suggests that Rebecca only played with men, did not consider them equal partners and only laughed at them behind their backs. (du Maurier 1938, 310) We can interpret her words as merely her desires: it is obvious that she was for the relationship much more than Rebecca. Maybe, she wanted to keep Rebecca in her memories as a perfect, idealized partner. Mrs. Danvers' caring for Rebecca is depicted by du Maurier as an ideal relationship between lady and housekeeper. In the heroine's eyes, she represents Rebecca, she functions basically as "the ghost of Rebecca" who is frightening all the time and who has to be fought with. Hitchcock visually represents it: Mrs. Danvers is like a shadow always keeping trace of Jane, always following her on the walls when she is introduced into the world of Manderley, to the mysteries of the castle. Besides, it is as if she popped up from nowhere and arrives always from the left side of the picture. Moreover, in Jane's subjective shots the camera zooms at her frightening face in tracking shot.

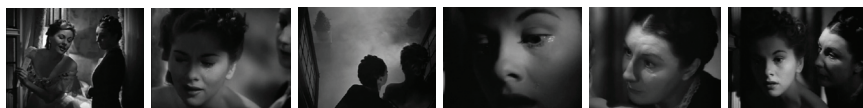


On the other hand, Hitchcock manages to show us Mrs. Danvers's homoerotic feelings towards Rebecca: especially in the scene when she introduces Jane to their secret world, Rebecca's room. The unused suite in the Western wing functioned as a "pleasure chamber" for the couple in Rebecca's life. Mrs. Danvers vividly describes how she combed Rebecca's hair or how she dressed her. Here, it is important to note that Hitchcock left out the line which states in the novel that for a very long time, Max combed Rebecca's hair every night. Then she cut her hair short and from that time on it was Mrs. Danvers's duty to do that. (du Maurier 1938, 196) Here, novel and film mutually fortify each other: du Maurier sums up the masculinization of Rebecca's character in the act of the hair cut, while Hitchcock provides us visual representation of the tender, and probably sexual, relationship between Rebecca and the housekeeper.

The second bedroom scene (right in the middle of the party) is the peak of Rebecca's torture: Mrs. Danvers is about to persuade Jane to commit suicide

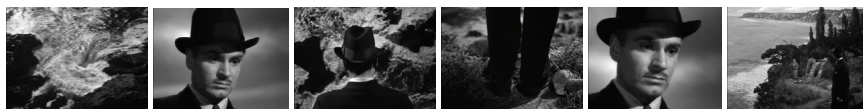


jumping out of the window. For Jane the bedroom is a "torture chamber." Mrs. Danvers' persuasion is almost successful: the heroine becomes dizzy ("tumbles into her words"). The visual representation of the Hitchcockian theme, vertigo can be detected in this scene: Mrs. Danvers and Jane next to each other (medium shot) - the housekeeper starts whispering into her ears- Mrs. Danvers' wicked face (close up) - Jane's terrorized face (close up) - the sea is rough, the music becomes more and more unbearable -the women on the balcony (shot from below) - and, finally the solution (?): fireworks announcing the discovery of Rebecca's body.



It is remarkable that all the other visual representations of vertigo are also connected to the "presence of Rebecca": Max is about to commit suicide on the seaside; Jane faints in the courtroom while Max is questioned on Rebecca's murder; and Mrs. Danvers is burning in the fire at the end of the movie.

Max, at the beginning of the movie, is standing on top of a cliff in Southern France and considering the idea of suicide. He is on the brink of jumping to the sea when Jane saves him shouting at him. The fact that Max is about to commit suicide is represented only visually: his face (close up) – dizzy eyes- the sea- his face (close up again).



Here we are presented with the parody of the romantic cliché-scene: the couple at the seaside. (Two other scenes can be considered in the movie as parodies of romantic films: once a little statuette of Cupid breaks in Manderley; and the film, shot on Max and Jane's honeymoon, gets torn when they are watching it.) The couple is talking about death and darkness not typical in case of romantic movies. Water does not function as a promise of new life but as a dangerous site "conveying a threat of dissolution." (Brill 1988, 209) Rebecca died on the sea, so when water appears it always evokes Rebecca's overwhelming presence in the couple's life. Besides this scene, the sea becomes centrally important in the scenes when Max admits that he killed Rebecca and when Rebecca's boat is found. The sea becomes "the land of the

dead", from where Rebecca "emerges and visits" Max and Jane. This is the place of the characters' downward spiraling: they become obsessed with the wrong object. They want to fight Rebecca and become the dominating force in Manderley instead of her. The couple is put to test: who is afraid of Rebecca?; who dares to be a man in Manderley instead of her?

Later, Max never considers the idea of committing suicide again. However, we can be sure that Hitchcock had a clear-cut idea to represent us something hidden with the help of inserting this scene. (Note: the scene can be read in the novel, too, but in a modified version. There Jane is frightened by Max who is described as an aggressive man. Later it turns out that Max and Rebecca visited this very same seaside on their honeymoon and Max always becomes aggressive when something reminds him of his wife. It is really important in the novel that aggression comes not only from Rebecca/Mrs. Danvers but also from Max towards Jane. In the movie, we cannot really trace aggression of any kind from Max: he is rather a father figure for Jane looking for a companion in the girl. (du Maurier 1938, 36-37)) Throughout the movie we try to find reasons for Max's suicide attempt. As the story unfolds, all of our assumptions ("the cause was his love for Rebecca", "he thinks he can never find love in this world again", etc.) turn out to be wrong. Obviously, the only reason can be that he killed Rebecca and now has a guilty conscience: he cannot bear the idea that he, the member of a prestigious family would probably end up in prison. At this point something frustrating can be detected: on the surface, the movie ends with the promise that the new couple is able to start out again from scratch without the overwhelming presence of the past. However, du Maurier's novel leaves no question: Max murdered his wife and it is a question whether the new couple can ever be happy (taking into account that even Mrs. Danvers escaped after setting fire on the castle).

Hitchcock accepted the original ending but in a 1940's mainstream Hollywood movie he had no means to express it directly as the male protagonist was not supposed to be a murderer. The ending had to be radically transformed and that is why the closing thirty minutes of the movie seem flustered: everything should be done to prevent the careless viewer from remembering the couple's first meeting in France and asking the question: if Max is not the murderer, why did he decide to commit suicide? It is remarkable that the other two visual representations of vertigo in connection with Rebecca (when Jane faints in the courtroom while Max is questioned on Rebecca's murder, and when Mrs. Danvers is almost unconsciously running up and down in Rebecca's room at the end of the film) are squeezed into the last minutes. These scenes reinforce the idea that Rebecca dominates the narrative. While in the novel, Dr. Baker's appearance comes in the nick of time for Max to escape, Hitchcock is forced to provide this scene as a solution. Max is not the murderer

and the story has to have a happy ending: the past/Rebecca/Mrs. Danvers are all eliminated and the Western wing is destroyed. The new couple can start a completely new life somewhere far from the shadows of the past. Hitchcock shot the movie according to the Hollywood conventions but believed in the exact opposite: Max killed his wife and, in this way, is not a typical Hollywood hero. He had to find a way somehow to express Max's guilt on a subtextual level: Max and Jane's first meeting proves what happened exactly.



On the surface, Manderley is the castle, the world of customary rituals and the characters are about to live up to it. On a subtextual level, the central theme of the story is a power game: who dares to be a man?, who will have the upper hand over the others and control life in Manderley? Obviously, Rebecca had a strong desire to gain dominance over others and behaving as a man who, conventionally in Western patriarchal ideology, must fulfill this role. She masculinises herself by cutting her hair short, taking up hobbies typical of men (sailing, horse riding, etc.) and seeking ways of individual happiness (organizing wild parties in London and not caring for wifely duties such as childbearing, taking care of husband, etc.). She acquires a "middlesex" position, to refer here to one important character in the novel, the Duchess of Middlesex. She does not appear but the characters constantly refer to her as a lady who probably committed adultery and gave life to an illegitimate baby. On the surface, the importance of referring to the duchess' story lies in the fact that the de Winter family is also a noble one, their succession is also of primary importance and, last but not least, Max concentrates on Rebecca's lie about being pregnant with a stranger's baby when lists the reasons why he killed her. However, the word "middlesex" constantly turning up throughout the book, draws our attention to the fact that being in a position between femininity and masculinity is crucial in the story. Of course, Hitchcock eliminated the references to the duchess from the movie: a typical Hollywood narrative would not bear the representation of even the hinting at of any kind of deviant sexuality. (In this respect the bedroom scenes risk the conflict with censorship.)

After Rebecca's death, there are three possible candidates in the power game: Mrs. Danvers, Jane and Max. We should bear in mind that both du Maurier and the film set out to reinforce Western, patriarchal ideology. This ideology does not permit any kind of deviant sexuality in the first place. Rebecca may have been lesbian/bisexual or she may just have expressed her sexual desires explicitly. In both cases, she had to be "punished" as she represented deviance in patriarchal ideology. Clearly, Mrs. Danvers cannot win in the race either: she represents "Rebecca's ghost", she is on the side of a deviant woman. So, she also has to be punished. In other words, Max and Jane are the only possible candidates.

It is not by coincidence that the expression "who dares to be a man?" refers only to males. In the patriarchal ideology, it is only men who are supposed to rise into eminent positions. As Andrew Tolson argues:

For most people . . . "masculinity" is a taken for granted part of everyday life. There is a masculine aura of competence, a way of talking and behaving towards others . . . images of masculinity enter into our most intimate communications... We can recall a whole repertoire of popular phrases and aphorisms- "take it like a man"; "big boys don't cry"- by which we continue to define personal experience . . . The "promise of power" is at the centre of a network of conventional masculine characteristics: authority, self-assertion, competitiveness, aggression, physical strength . . . Manhood is a perpetual future, a vision of inheritance, an emptiness waiting to be filled. (Tolson 1977, 7-8, 23)

According to the patriarchal logic of Western civilization, Max should rise to the dominant position in Manderley. However, he is unable to fulfill the expectations as he undergoes a crisis of masculinity. The main reason behind his crisis is that he was (and still is) surrounded by women who did not accept him as a strong, male leader. Rebecca ridiculed him all the time with her flirts and Mrs. Danvers organizes the household affairs instead of him. The two women excluded Max from the affairs of Manderley. It seems that Max accepted his secondary position in the castle in Rebecca's time. However, under the surface, he became more and more aggressive and waited for the time to regain his position. The time came when Rebecca shared her secrets with him. No matter what the secret was (Rebecca being pregnant with someone else's baby or being lesbian), it gave a fatal blow to Max. Max killed his wife in order to be able to gain the upper hand again in Manderley. However, he was mistaken. Mrs. Danvers remained in the castle and arranged everything in order to conserve Rebecca's presence. Max understands that first Mrs. Danvers' presence has to be eliminated. Only after that can he turn

to "behaving as a man in Manderley." However, Mrs. Danvers' presence is too strong: Max cannot win over her.

In his fight with Mrs. Danvers, Max finds a companion in Jane. Clearly, Jane cannot be "the man in Manderley." She is the heroine who has the task to support the hero throughout the narrative and not to risk being deviant. In patriarchal ideology, all women who are strong and capable of acquiring a dominant position instead of men are considered deviant and thus have to be punished. Jane never behaves as a strong woman: her character fits into patriarchal expectations. She is a sensitive, young and innocent girl who tries to understand the tragic story of Manderley. Moreover, her innocence is emphasized by the fact that du Maurier's story echoes Gothic features in a domestic context. Rebecca and Mrs. Danvers are created as terrifying women who bring death and sorrow as opposed to Jane who is supposed to bring new life into Manderley. She finds the story of Rebecca and Manderley both terrifying and impressive. The castle appears as a labyrinth for her: it is vast and obscure but at the same time magnificent. All in all, Jane cannot function as the dominating force in Manderley. This would be beyond the expectations of patriarchal ideology towards heroines.

We arrive at the conclusion that no-one dares to be a man in the story. The characters cannot live up to the expectations of patriarchal society. Manderley has to be lost at the end of the film because rejuvenation is possible only somewhere else. Hitchcock's first American anti-romantic movie ends with the devastating fire in Manderley. Mrs. Danvers sets fire on the castle and dies in the western wing. Max and Jane are looking up at the burning castle in the final shots and hope that this fire will eliminate the shadows of the past from their lives. Hitchcock seemingly ends the movie with the promise of new life and happiness. Max and Jane will move away and start everything from scratch. According to Žižek's model, the couple is happily united, even if a third person (Mrs. Danvers) has to be sacrificed and the couple has to accept bourgeois, everyday life. (Žižek 1992, 9) However, this is not the case. Max and Jane may start their life all over again somewhere else but will they be happy? The movie provides only one hint that the couple will not be able to free itself from the past: the very first sequence of Jane's dream. The film starts out with a flashback. As David Bordwell argues:

In the fabula . . . (which embodies the action as a chronological, cause-and-effect chain of events occurring within a given duration and a spatial field) . . . events take place either simultaneously . . . or successively . . . it is obvious that fabula events can be deployed in the syuzhet . . . (the actual arrangement and presentation of the fabula) . . . in any fashion whatever . . . The fabula constitutes a chronological series of

actions; the syuzhet can adhere to this chronology or shuffle events. The most vivid example is obviously the flashback, in which a prior fabula event is positioned later in the syuzhet . . . (we talk about ) “enacted recounting” (when) a character tells about past events, and the syuzhet then presents the events in a flashback . . . Reordering fabula events also obviously creates narrational gaps, which may be temporary or permanent; focused or diffuse; flaunted or suppressed . . . The flashback may display events that occur prior to the first event represented in the syuzhet; this is the external flashback. (Bordwell 1986, 77-78)

In this case, the flashback creates a permanent, focused and suppressed narrational gap: where is the heroine while recollecting her memories and what is she doing? The gap is permanent because we do not get any information from the film about the couple’s present situation. It is focused as we are after a specific information (Are they happy?), and suppressed as this question seems to be the least important in the movie. Actually, the whole movie is in external flashback: the heroine is recollecting not only her dream but also the events that took place in Manderley long ago. However, nothing guides us that actually this is what is happening: the voice-over is eliminated and no image is shown from the couple’s new life. From the first scene it is obvious that the memories still give Jane much sorrow.

On the other hand, the novel makes references to the couple’s new life constantly. There are hints that suggest that they are not entirely happy with the new situation: for example, Mrs. Danvers, after setting fire, left Manderley, or seemingly Max and Jane do not have anything to talk about except the past. In short, the couple has not freed itself from the shadows of the past. Here, du Maurier and Hitchcock mutually strengthen each other’s story. Hitchcock believed in du Maurier’s ending (as the incorporation of Max’s suicide attempt shows) but he did not have the means to express it directly in a 1940’s mainstream Hollywood movie. In the end, Max and Jane have “to look up”; Manderley is burning, the past is left behind and the couple may be able to live without fears. In fact, this is the beginning of the real tortures, of “looking down” as the couple will experience a deep emotional crisis described by Daphne du Maurier.

### 3. Conclusion

In this paper, I analyzed the appearance of “vertigo” in Alfred Hitchcock’s *Rebecca* (1940). I identified the concept of “vertigo” at the heart of Hitchcock’s

oeuvre. The most important finding was that Hitchcock was able to deal thoroughly with his theme only after he had established himself as a distinct figure in the Hollywood studio system. Thus, I could analyze only the germs of Hitchcock's favourite theme in *Rebecca*. "Looking up and looking down" is the central structure of feeling at the centre of Hitchcock's films. The characters experience both "harmonious, higher spheres of existence" (= love, happiness) and death and sorrow. Sometimes "looking up" is dominant at the end of the films, sometimes "looking down." In *Rebecca*, the couple is obsessed with the "wrong object" and they inevitably have "to go down" in the end. A world full of death and sorrow is presented, but, as the analysis shows, Hitchcock had to deal with these anti-Hollywood issues in a very subtle way at the beginning of his American career.

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# (Mis)guiding the Reader in Paul Auster's *City of Glass*

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This paper examines the way Paul Auster spoils the conventions that govern narratives. The story plays with the rules of narratives by disrupting them. *City of Glass* is a metafictional novel in the sense that it wrecks havoc on the regulations a novel should obey to. This story is a fragmented account of events connected by mere chance, acted out by agents who are not the ones they seem to be in a setting that is nothing more than a translucent cage for the hollow individuals inhabiting it.

*City of Glass* uses the form of detective fiction to tell the story of the disintegration of the protagonist's identity. Daniel Quinn the detective fiction writer is accidentally hired by the Stillman family to solve a strange case. As the story goes on, the circumstances of the case get more and more confusing. The whole story is practically falling apart, including the characters themselves. The ending leaves open all the questions that have been raised through the story, giving the reader the accurate feeling that there is more to this short novel than it may look at first sight. Though it has all the formal characteristics of a conventional detective story, *City of Glass* is more like a fiction on the nature of fiction itself. Examining and spoiling the conventions of storytelling and narrative structuring, Paul Auster keeps the reader from seeing this work for what it is. But at the end the reader realizes the trick played on him and looking at the story in a way that is free from interpretation it is easy to see the real point of the story.

The paper explores the question of how long the reader can be misled by ambiguous elements of the story before realizing that he was misled. The method of my research will be to analyze *City of Glass* 'respectably,' i.e. according to the elements that make up a story and point out the ambiguities. I am to underline the conventions that make the reader misinterpret the story, then I show the purpose of these elements that is different from the role they would have if this short novel would be a conventional piece of narrative.

In the first main section I will give a brief account of the evolution the detective fiction genre from its early stages to the present showing the changes that occurred in the form and in the concerns of the genre. Also, I am to look into what similarities can be found between the technique used to solve the enigma of the novel and the reader's approach for instance to *City of Glass*.

In the second main section I will give a comparative analysis of the story itself in terms of plot and narration. On the one hand, I survey what general conventions govern the structure of narratives and how these conventions influence the readers. On the other hand, I show how the storyline is constructed in *City of Glass* and how it plays with the conventions.

The third main section will deal with the characterization methods used conventionally as opposed to the disintegration of identity that takes place in this case.

## 1. The Evolution of the Detective Fiction Genre

To summarize the evolution of the detective novel: it has undergone major changes from the British classic formula that gives an account of the conservative intellectual game of the elite solving a puzzle and restoring status quo without the intention of challenging it, the detective being completely remote from the case, solving it with pure positivistic logic. In the American hard-boiled type the protagonist has doubts about the order he/she is about to restore. He solves the puzzle handed to him with reflecting the enigma through his own identity. By doing this, he also challenges the idea of the hermeneutical method of solving the crime. The metaphysical/metatextual model of the detective story is the one where these doubts are applied even to the literary medium, in this case the text, itself. The text leaves the reader with no solution or reward of closure, just a set of open questions and the aesthetic joy caused by the virtuosity this loss was presented by

This discussion of the detective genre in itself was important because these stages are all present in *City of Glass*. The novel itself is a metafictional detective novel, so it uses the conventional detective novel as a model for an experiment on the possible variations of form. The enigma solving formula of both previous types are connected to the novel. For example when Quinn makes the map of Peter Stillman Sr.'s walks that is a great example for the hermeneutical way of solving enigmas. While the way that he is *tailing* the old man is the method used usually in the *hard-boiled* model. There are similarities between the reader's approach and the way detectives want to solve the

enigma in the American type model, for the reader is involved in the case. It is not enough to see how Quinn solves the case, the reader wants to solve it for himself, even before Quinn does.

*City of Glass* uses both previous models to make up the new model it uses to experiment with the reader and to a certain extent with the genre

Itself, too. I think it is vital to know the customs and the limits of the genre its „highly organized structure and recognized conventions“ (P. D. James 2009.), to be able to understand why this genre was used in the first place.

### The reasons for the fallibility of the reader

It is hard not to see the analogy between the outcome of the readers' attempts to construct a solution for the story and the failure of the protagonist of the *City of Glass*, Daniel Quinn to solve the Stillman case. Both make the mistake of not seeing the gaps in the story as gaps but rather looking at them like opportunities to apply expectations based on previously gained knowledge. According to Cohan and Shires this is explained by the readers' expectations:

the fact that we always interpret literary works to some extent in the light of our own concerns – indeed that is one sense of our own concerns we are incapable of doing anything else (23)

The same thing happened in both cases: the reader of a text took certain things for granted due to bad choices of interpretation and the obsession to find the explanation that fits in the story. In turn, the explanation that only exists in one's mind makes the interpreter overlook obvious clues simply because of being on the wrong track. The objective of the writer is to uphold the illusion of the reader that everything goes as the reader *planned* up until the very end when the misled reader is left with not the expected solution but the realization of having been tricked all along.

Certain elements of the story are ambiguous and can be interpreted, if combined with the reader's expectations to suggest that *City of Glass* is a conventional detective novel. Eventually however, *City of Glass* turns out to be much more than a piece of conventional detective fiction. It becomes clear that what the reader has just finished was a metafictional detective novel, for the reader has been deceived by the author all along. Paying attention to the plot and the characters' roles in the plot, the true genre of the book remained hidden, nothing in the story was what it seemed to be. Here all these elements only got a different significance when they were mixed with and improved by the reader's possible explanations. The major effect of the book is outside the story, located in the readers' mind. The impact takes place after finishing

the book, when the reader realizes having been victimized by the writer. After realizing what he has to look for, the clues about the metafictional nature of the text start to crystallize. All the clues that the reader took for granted to show the solution will be there at the end, to gain a new meaning. In fact, something is revealed to the reader at the very end but it is not the solution of the Stillman case. It is the mere fact that the reader was tricked and was even given hints about being tricked but still did not realize what was happening.

## 2. Disrupting the conventions of storytelling

All narratives share some basically similar structural features. The set of these features are called narrative poetics which, according to Cohan and Shires, are “the set of identifiable conventions that make a given text recognizable as a narrated story” (53). Being aware of these rules is vital for the reader to understand the story. These conventions are learned through experience and the reader is being reassured of their existence by the narratives themselves. For example in the detective fiction genre the reader expects a twist in the story at the end and because in most of the cases the writer of the story puts a twist there, this twist will reassure the reader that he was right and the expectations of his were true. So next time when he reads a narrative of the same genre he will expect the twist again. The story is the sequencing of certain events in the linear order characteristic of narrative fiction. An event is a sort of physical or mental activity, an occurrence in time. As opposed to this, a sequence as Cohan and Shires states “contains at least two events, one to establish the narrative situation, and the other to alter the initial situation” (54). For example in *City of Glass* Quinn reading at home at the beginning is the event that established the situation and the phone call he received altered the situation setting the story in motion.

Syntagmatic structure orders the events that take place in the story along a timeline and by the logical relationship of the events to one another. The events can be categorized into two groups: kernels and satellites. The kernel events raise possibilities, alter the story, introduce something new that may influence the outcome, while satellite events amplify or fill in the outline of the sequence practically filling the gaps between the kernel events by keeping the story in motion but not altering it in any way. For example, when Daniel Quinn visits the Stillmans’ residence in the role of being Paul Auster the private detective is a kernel event for it changes the course of the story because he acquires information about the case he will work on. In fact that

is the scene where he commits himself to his employers and accepts the case. But the scene where he goes to the diner to have dinner is a satellite event for it has no particular effect on the story, it only fills in the gaps between the next significant event (kernel event) taking place next morning, when he goes to Columbia Library and reads Peter Stillman Sr.'s book and gains new information from it.

Another feature that distinguishes kernel events from satellite events is that while kernel events cannot be removed or replaced without altering the sequence, satellite events can be reordered or replaced. It would make no difference regarding the story whether Quinn would have gone to have dinner that night or to see a baseball game. But if for instance he would have read Peter Stillman Sr.'s book first and would then listen to Peter Stillman Jr.'s monologue, that would certainly make a difference.

The story has a different order in time and in logic. There is a difference between the relation of the events when only their place on the timeline is considered (temporal relations) or when their logical relations are considered. The temporal ordering is always present in the narrative: that is called the story. But the logical relationship between the events is not mandatory. This ordering based on the logical cause and effect relation of the events is called the plot. Because most of the narratives have a plot, the readers expect every single piece of narrative fiction to have a plot. Being reassured of the above conventions, readers tend to discover the causal relationship of events even when it is not present at all. The absence of causal relation of the events or illogical ordering of the events is not mandatory for a sequence. Temporal ordering, however, is essential.

An enigma is often used by the writer to keep the story moving, the main goal of the story itself is to answer this initial question and all the events of the story gain meaning only in relation to this question. Of course, this tool of the writer is much more significant in detective fiction than in any other type of narrative. For in detective fiction the sole purpose of the story is to get the answer for the question raised at the beginning.

An ordinary story is based on the logical-causal relationship of the events. Something happens and it brings up consequences that bring up further consequences. In the plot of the *City of Glass* as it is even stated on the very first page of the book: "nothing was real except chance." (Auster 1990:3) There is no clear causality between the events at any point; the events are more like separate units floating. It is like a gigantic set of accidental coincidences put after one another. Neither Quinn nor the reader can be sure that he is on the right track at any point.

It is not the writer who creates the plot of the events but the expectations of the reader. The whole story is started by an accidental phone call; Quinn

was not destined to get involved with the case, he is not even sure why he accepted it. The whole story gets disrupted at the train station scene where all Quinn has is a photo taken twenty years ago of a man with no real distinctive features. It is even stated in the text that considering just the photo, anyone on that train could have been Peter Stillman Sr. There were actually two versions of him getting off the train: an old bum and another in decent clothes.

From this point on the story can be interpreted by saying that Quinn is on the wrong track all along and every clue he finds every lead he follows is a false one, only seeming true, for he wants them to be true. The same goes for the reader too, who is equally aware of the possibility of Quinn's bad choice at the train station but wants to believe (assumes) that Quinn made the right choice after all. In the light of this, the events that take place later on may seem correct, but assuming that Quinn followed the wrong Stillman from the beginning can be equally likely and true. The only thing that makes the reader assume that Quinn's decision was correct is the belief that *City of Glass* follows the conventions of narrative and therefore even if the plot seems a bit complicated or unclear it is existent after all.

But this story *mocks* conventions. The best example for this mockery that can be found in the book is the scene where Quinn visits Paul Auster and there they talk about the essay Auster is working on. The essay about Don Quixote, which is considered to be a hoax for the story it tells, is made up and there is confusion about the authorship of the book also. The research question of Auster's essay is very interesting (Auster 1990:120) "... In other words, to what extent would people tolerate blasphemies if they gave them amusement? The answer is obvious isn't it? To any extent." The presence of the version of the author of the book itself suggests that he will provide the solution to the enigma and this is exactly what he does. He clearly states that no matter how obvious a hoax is the writer can get away with it easily as long as it is presented in an amusing manner.

The irony of this is that he even gets away with the trick after telling the audience about it. Because so many odd events happen in the story that by this point the reader had to keep so many useless little pieces of information in mind and has his head full of possible endings that his brain is just not capable of seeing this statement for what it is: the solution to the text. Not the story, for the story has no solution, but the text. This little intermezzo seems like an interesting thing to think about like a detour but still, the reader just cannot wait to be back on the case itself. This event, if the reader keeps the conventions of the previous narratives in mind, seems to be a satellite event. It is a background scene with the purpose of adding color to the story, without changing the course of the events. But in fact this event is a kernel event: it holds the solution to the enigma presented by the story. The reader falls prey

to clinging to the standards of structure that he is used to, namely that the solution of the story is revealed only at the very end. And besides, the reader and Quinn are looking for the solution of the Stillman case, not that of the book the reader is reading, which is *City of Glass*. That is why one can easily fail to see this scene as a kernel event. The idea that the writer can fool the reader any way he wants, as long as it is presented in an amusing manner, has nothing to do with the Stillman case. But in fact the short novel itself has little connection with the case, too. The case is only a tool of the detective fiction genre, the genre only used as a model for this narrative about narratives.

These were only the main examples underlining the absence of the structured plot and how the author can hide this from the reader. Not to mention the fact that the reader is even teased to find the truth out but is kept in a trance like state by the technique Auster uses that leaves the reader blind to what is going on even when it is clearly shown to him.

Another good example for this phenomenon, the will to see meaning that fits into readers' expectations in things that have nothing to do with them, is the part when Quinn draws a map of the assumed Peter Stillman Sr.'s walks. The drawings are actually in the book for the reader to see with his/her own eyes. To a certain extent they do look like letters but only after one is told what to look for, as they may as well look like the map of some of the states of America or the birth-marks on the right leg of someone's long dead grandmother.

The reference to *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is a clear hint to the reader that the story does not have a plot. When Quinn talks to Peter Stillman Sr. for the second time, the old man says he chose the name of Henry Dark as his imaginary character to support his made up thesis because the initials H. D. referred to the initials of Humpty Dumpty, one of the characters from Lewis Carroll's other work *Through the Looking Glass*. This coincidence can be interpreted as a reference to the works of Lewis Carroll and to *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. When Quinn wants to find out what the reason of Peter Stillman Sr.'s walks is and that why he is gathering pieces of broken items, he gets a concealed answer: nothing in connection with the plot, for there is no plot in this story just like there is no plot and therefore no logical relation between the events of Alice's story in *Wonderland*.

Most narratives follow certain conventions that make them easier to understand for the reader and easier to write for the writer. In the case of the story this convention is that the events that take place along the storyline are structured syntagmatically. This structure orders the events both temporally and logically in most of the cases. However, in *City of Glass* the logical ordering is only created by the reader, influenced by the expectation that the story will follow the conventions of narrative fiction. The reader is creating a



plot where there is nothing more than events in chronological order, without any causal relationship. It is not essential for a story to have a plot, for there were numerous plotless stories even before *City of Glass* for example *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, to which a clear reference is made, like giving a hint to the reader to give up making up the plot for himself and just look at the story as it is. As Brian MacHale puts it "metanarrative is conditioned by the situation of its telling the identity and interests of its teller" (6). The narration is in third person singular all through the story. When the narrator reveals his identity he is claiming himself to be a friend of Auster's (the one in the book). His only sources are Auster and Quinn's red notebook. Auster met Quinn in person only once and talked to him on the phone another time. His information on Quinn is vague, for it is impossible to form a clear opinion about anyone under so little time. The red notebook is incomplete too, for there are straight references in the story about Quinn being unable to put everything down even if that was his primary intention.

There are descriptions of complete days missing from the notebook and there are many parts where the writing is undecipherable. For instance when Quinn was *tailgating* the old Stillman he wrote complete lines on one another. And he was not even writing into the book every single moment, as he summarized the events of the certain days at the end of the given day. It is sure that there are lots of things that are missing from the notebook. Another symbolic hint on the corrupted nature of the narration is that Quinn used the pen he bought from a deaf and mute man at the train station. How could anyone *tell* a story that has been written with a deaf and mute man's pen? This suggests that even the information actually included in the red notebook is only a feeble attempt to give an account to something that even the writer of the record could not understand. The list of the happenings cannot be complete or correct because Quinn did not have the tools to write a correct or complete memoir. He had little understanding of the events, it was impossible to put down everything, and all he had was the symbolically (for this purpose of storytelling at least) useless tool: the pen he bought from a deaf and mute man.

To summarize the nature of the narration I think it is fair to say that it is a fragmented account of the events. The events themselves took place mostly accidentally, without causal relations among them, and were carried out by agents who were not the people one may think they were. I used the phrase *Coup de Grace* to underline that the narration that is supposed to help the reader to understand the events and the reasons for them and to provide an explanation for how the characters' actions push the reader further into confusion and uncertainty instead.



### 3. Breaking the rules of characterization

Characters are the agents in the story who carry out the actions that serve as the events of the story. The characters are in relation to the sequence of events according to Conan and Shire: "that set of relations identifies the functions which the characters perform as actors" (69). These functions are similar in nature to the functions of words in a sentence. The story has a subject and an object. The subject carries out the actions that keep the story in motion. Like Quinn in *City of Glass*: his investigation is at the centre of the story and the story is kept in motion through him performing new actions, doing different things that influence the possible outcome of the story. And there is the object representing the goal of the story in most of the cases. In *City of Glass* the object is Peter Stillman Sr. straightforwardly enough, as he is in fact the object of Quinn's surveillance. So his function is hinted by the writer in a concealed manner. The function of subject or object is in a direct relation to the events of the story. But an indirect relation to the events is possible, too. These relations bring forth four additional classes of functions for actors.

The sender (initiating or enabling the event), the receiver (benefiting from, or registering effects of the event), the opponent (retarding or impeding the event by opposing the subject or competing with the subject for the object), and the helper (advancing or furthering the event by supporting or assisting the subject) (Cohan and Shire 1993:69).

These four additional functions for actors are present in most of the narratives, too. They are not limited to be filled by characters, for objects or abstractions can have the function of these classes as well. For example, in the event of Quinn trying to solve the Stillman case: if Quinn is the subject, Peter Stillman is the object, then the sender can be Mrs. Saavedra, the nurse who takes care of Peter Stillman Jr., for she gave the phone number of Auster/Quinn to Peter and Virginia Stillman, believing that it was the number of Paul Auster the detective. Thus Quinn got connected to the case. The receiver is Peter Stillman Jr., because he would benefit from Quinn stopping his father, Peter Stillman Sr., in his plan to kill his son. The helper is the character version of Paul Auster, promising to cash in the check for Quinn, so helping him financially.

As the example above shows, it is fairly easy to find the class of function for the characters in most of the stories. Another thing that must be mentioned though is that the classification of the actors can change depending on the event that is in the scope of our examination. Thus the certain actors can change their classes as the story goes on. The traits of a given actor possesses

are based on culture's assumptions and certain qualities that are recognizable as human nature. This means that the meaning of the trait should always be interpreted in the light of the cultural background of the historical era in which the story was written, as certain qualities have changed their meaning through time. For example, the ideal figure of women has changed a lot even in the last century. From the stout, almost chubby ideal to the slim, almost boyish figure of today's celebrities. The change a character's personality goes through can be signified by the fact that the traits change, disappear or get replaced by other traits.

The traits the actor possesses can be signified by the name of the character as the most direct approach (Henry Dark – a sinister figure from the past, Peter Stillman – the man who does not change because he practically never grew up or Max Work – the symbol of Quinn's obsession for work). The number of traits a character has defines the complexity of the character. This distinguishes so called round (detailed) characters from flat, uniform type like characters. The standard is that usually the characters in direct relation with the sequence of events are round characters, while the actors in indirect relation are flat characters. For instance in *City of Glass* there is very little we know about Virginia Stillman or Peter Stillman Jr., as opposed to Daniel Quinn, the main character of *City of Glass*. On the following pages I will analyze the personality of the protagonist of the story based on the examination of the changes his character goes through.

In the *City of Glass* there are eventually no stable characters. The best example for this is the protagonist himself, Daniel Quinn. He is a reclusive author called Daniel Quinn, a detective fiction writer who uses the pseudonym William Wilson (the name of a doppelgaenger from Poe) to hide his own identity. The hero of Quinn's works is Max Work; this name obviously acts as a symbol of Quinn only finding joy in total devotion to his work. What the reader sees at the very beginning is a cacophony of multiple confused identities compressed into one character. Quinn was an unstable character even at the very beginning. His wife had gone, he did not have any friends anymore, he publishes his works under his pseudonym (giving up his name)"and although in many ways Quinn continued to exist, he no longer existed for anyone but himself." (Auster 1990:5). His only anchor to stability is the apartment he rents. But the fact that he does not own the flat expresses the temporal nature of this anchor, too. He is unstable even to himself. Quinn has habits that underline his will to become nonexistent. For example, he feels it easier to identify himself with his fictional creation Max Work, than his pseudonym William Wilson.

His walks in the city served as his method to disappear and not just from other people but himself, too. Wandering aimlessly, clearing his head from all

thoughts: this is when he feels himself the best he can. Neither his everyday life, nor the writing of his works, nor anything else can make him feel the joy he feels when he can get away from himself and just act as an automatic walking device. It is easy to see how the traits the writer equips Quinn with set forth the fate of this character. His main reason for accepting the Stillman case is that it seemed like taking an escapist holiday. Being someone else, the detective Paul Auster, was a way for him to be like someone he always wanted to be: Max Work. Becoming people who do not exist was not new to Quinn before he took the role of Paul Auster the detective. After assuming Auster's identity, he also goes on taking roles. For example, during his three meetings with Peter Stillman Sr. every time they met Quinn used a different identity. Slowly but surely he is lost in an endless maze of names. First, he considers the character he is acting like an empty shell and this comforts him, for his walks were to give him the exact same feeling. When he is spending most of his time *tailing* Peter Stillman Sr., he eventually identifies with him more and more, taking the same path his suspect does. So Quinn becomes the old man's shadow, an alternate version of his subject through the pursuit. Quinn is not even sure about whether or not the old Stillman is aware of his presence. It occurs to him that in fact the old man leads him by the nose and the pursuits only allow the old man to know exactly where Quinn is. By this thought the possibility of changing the function of the actors in direct relation to the story without focusing on another event (the conventional way actors can be classified into another function class) is introduced, suggesting that the roles of the characters are far from stable and the tables can be turned at any moment.

The deconstruction of Quinn's identity begins to speed up when he loses track of Peter Stillman Sr., so the first part of his life he loses is the target of the case he is working on (the subject of the event). After trying to get in touch with his employers and failing to do so (he lost the receivers of the event, too) he is actually the only character of the case who still exists. The other characters have dropped out of the story. The lost Quinn comes up with the idea that after failing as a private eye his only chance to solve the case is to put the Stillman residence under constant surveillance. He practically moves into an alley on the opposite side of the street and spends months there, watching the house. Quinn wants to get verification that his work was not useless, and he sacrifices everything just to get an answer. This sacrifice is a typical feature of the hard boiled detective novel according to Swope: "Thus, in order to protect the sanctity of the bourgeois home, the detective sacrificed his own position, or home, within that space" (Swope 2002:17.). When finally all his money is gone he comes out of the alley to go home and get some more money in order to be able to continue the surveillance of the

house. He sees himself in the window of a shop and realizes that his looks are reduced to the looks of a bum. This at that point does not mean much to him he has already lost his interest in his looks. But it is hard to overlook the fact that he got so identified with the target of his surveillance that the target actually turned upon him. The only thing he is obsessed with is the case. After talking to Auster on the phone he finds out that Peter and Victoria Stillman left the house before he even started his twenty-four-seven watch of it, because Peter Stillman's father committed suicide the same day he lost track of him. Now he actually lost the event itself, for without the object the goal cannot be archived, so the case becomes unsolvable. Quinn's character gained function in relation with the event itself (what is now gone) so the disintegration of his character speeds up. He tries to go home and return to his old life only to find that his apartment is now rented by a woman. His old life is impossible to return to, he has no money no home: he is actually a bum. His last and only anchor to reality is lost. All through the story the possibility to quit this game and return to his own life was taken for granted but when his home thus his only connection to reality is lost the game he was playing ends up with a dreadful result: Quinn has denied his own self for so long, impersonating nonexistent people, that it is impossible to return to his original identity for it no longer exists. Now he is stuck in the case more precisely the absence of the case because he lost the circumstances he possessed at the starting point of the story. With this possibility inaccessible to him he slowly fades away. He decides to go to the Stillman residence and stay there. He finds the house empty as if no-one had ever lived there. He settles in a room and spends his time writing. By this point he has lost interest in life so much that he does not even try to find out who is providing him with food everyday or to go to the light-switch to turn on the lights when it is dark. He destroys his other identities William Wilson and Max Work, so there is no one left but Daniel Quinn in „his descent into being a non-identity” (Dawson). The only thing left to him is his red notebook he bought at the beginning of the Stillman case. He wanted to put everything down into it so he can keep track of what is happening. He is acquiescent to the situation. And when the red notebook's last page is full, Quinn too disappears without a trace, suggesting that the only thing that kept him alive was the flow the words he put down into his notebook. Being denied to write more by having no more space in his notebook he *ceases* to exist. Or as Swope puts it “Quinn himself seems to dissolve with the final words of his red notebook.” (Swope 2002)

As one can easily see, the character of Daniel Quinn was unstable from the very beginning. His tendency to feel all right when being nonexistent to himself either on one of his walks or to play the role of a nonexistent character showed his fate of disappearing without a trace. Later, losing his connection

to reality and his interest in everything but writing in the notebook suggested that when all his reasons to exist will be gone or become inaccessible Quinn himself will become nonexistent too.

## Conclusion

Paul Auster's *City of Glass* is not a conventional detective novel. It is in fact a work examining and playing with the governing conventions of fiction itself using the formal requirements of detective stories as a model. It testifies that the writer can mislead the reader all along the story with ambiguous narrative elements, because the reader will fall prey to his own interpretation based on the ongoing conventions of narratives. There are hints all over the story that could make the reader realize this, let alone the clear statement made by the fictional representative of the writer. But all this is of no use; the reader will continue to cling to his expectations based of false interpretation. In the end, when the reader finally realizes the trick played on him is indulged by the sheer virtuosity of the writer who could get away with his deed to the end of the story.

In the first main section I examined the changes that occurred in the genre of detective fiction through time: the changes of detective fiction's form, and the shift from epistemological to ontological concerns. From the first occurrence of the genre: the classical British model where the detective solved the case from a remote position without doubts about the status quo, through the 'hard-boiled' type in which the protagonist has to get involved in the events, and had to reflect the enigma on his/her own identity and set of values thus questioning the status quo he/her is about to restore. In the most recent type called metaphysical detective fiction the doubts that appeared in the 'hard-boiled' type are applied to the literary medium itself. This part gave an insight to the model Auster was using to show how the reader can be misled about the nature of the story by narrative devices to the very end. That no matter how many elements of the story were disrupted readers still cling to the conventions used in regular narratives.

The second main section described the conventions that govern the structure of the story in narratives. It defined the most important notions like: the types of events, the sequence of events, syntagmatic structure, and the difference between story and plot. These conventions usually make the story easier to understand for the reader, but in this case they lead to a false interpretation of the story, i.e. to seeing plot where there is nothing just a string of events in chronological order.

The third main section dealt with the conventions of narratives regarding the functions and traits of characters. It described the method by which actors of the story can be functionally categorized and how their functions can change depending on which event is in focus. Characters can lose their traits or gain new ones through the sequence of events, but their function cannot change without changing the event in connection with what their relation is examined. In *City of Glass*, beside the constant disintegration of the protagonist's identity through losing his traits even his functional role is instable. This instability can suggest the reader that the conventional narrative rules that govern the actors of a story are disrupted here, too.

The reader can be misled to the very end no matter how obvious the signs on being misled are. The reader keeps on interpreting the elements of the story in order to fit them into his expectations. This is the answer to the initial question of this paper.

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# Rebuilding a Nation

## The Way of Devolution in Scotland in the Second Part of the Twentieth Century

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### **Abstract**

This paper focuses on two crucial referendums on a Scottish body of self-government: the referendum of 1979, when devolution failed to attract enough support and the referendum of 1997 when devolution was endorsed. The paper offers a detailed examination of the period in-between. The rise of the SNP and the reactions of Labour and the Tories to this are investigated in connection with the way of devolution. It is argued that the democratic deficit, the growing influence of the European Union, and the revaluation of the Scottish national identity together led to the success of the 1997 referendum.

**Keywords:** Devolution, Scottish Parliament, UK referendums, SNP

### **Introduction**

The citizens of the European Union nowadays can observe two totally opposing impulses. On the one hand, the spread of globalisation and the expansion of transnational organisations are characteristic of EU. On the other hand, various national aspirations for self-determination, the rebirth of nationalism is to be observed. The power of the nation state is under pressure from two directions, from above, from the supra-national level and from below, from the level of national or regional autonomists. At the same time, the national state identities are questioned by sub- and supra-state identities.

Nationalism newly emerges especially in the case of the “nations without states” (Guibernau 2005, 1) for example in Catalonia, the Basque Country, Flanders, Wales and Scotland.

In the case of the United Kingdom the presence and the role of the “nations without states,” the Welsh and the Scots, were and are highly determinant from a constitutional point of view. The Union of the English and Scottish Parliaments in 1707 resulted in the transformation of the English Kingdom. Although with various force and success, the “Celtic fringe’s” demand for Home Rule had been present till the second half of the twentieth century. The breakthrough in this campaign was accompanied by the need for constitutional reform; the claim to self-government in Scotland and Wales stimulated the decentralization of the United Kingdom.

The devolution issue is one of the most hotly debated segments of the whole constitutional reform process; this is especially true in the case of Scotland (Stenhouse 2004, 8-27). In this paper I intend to focus on two crucial moments of the campaign for devolution in post-war Scottish history: the referendums of 1979 and 1997. My aim is to investigate which *internal* political, economic, and social and which *external factors* led to the success of the referendum of 1997 in Scotland after the unsuccessful referendum in 1979. I will argue that this change can be related to three major factors: firstly, the decline of Britain in world politics and in connection with this the changes of the deep structure of the British political and economic system, secondly, the revaluation of the British-Scottish-European (Continental) relations within the European Union, thirdly, the change of Scottish self-understanding. In my view, these factors complement each other and at the same time they stimulate one another, none of them is responsible for the change in the Scottish attitude to devolution on its own.

## 1. Campaign for Self-government in Scotland since 1707

The roots of the consciousness of being a separate community, especially among members of “nations without states,” originated in the past in which the particular nation concerned had its own political institutions. The current strengthening of nationalist movements among “nations without states” is characteristic of nations which once enjoyed an independent or at least autonomous political and cultural identity that is now being invoked, reinterpreted under new socio-political circumstances. To understand their



motives in the twentieth century, these “roots of consciousness” have to be examined first (Guibernau 2005, 2).

Unofficially the Scottish campaign for self-governance exists since Scotland and England were *de jure* united in 1603 when James VI of Scotland became the ruler of England under the name of James I. Despite this, the *de facto* unification of the two countries was not realized in the seventeenth century. This higher level of unification was reached in 1707 when the Act of Union united the parliaments of England and Scotland (Mackie 1991, 221-262).

Parallel to this process the establishment of the special British-Scottish dual identity began. Foreign affairs contributed to locking Scottish politics into a British framework. From the middle of the eighteenth century the series of wars against France, a country ruled by the “ancien regime,” appeared in the British propaganda as a fight for the defence of British liberty. After 1789 that liberty was threatened by the revolutionary terror of republican France and what mattered in Scotland at this time was the unprecedented popularity which these wars added to being Protestant and British (Brown et al. 1998, 4-5). In the course of this period the notion of Scottish identity became ancillary to the common British self-definition (Colley 1992, 78-84).

Nevertheless, localism remained strong and came gradually into opposition with the power of the central state. Scotland developed its own version of the central state in the form of the *Scottish Secretary* and the *Scottish Office*. In 1885 the first Secretary for Scotland was appointed, in response to nationalist campaigning for Scottish matters to be given more attention by Westminster. The creation of the post extended the subordination of Scottish affairs to English party politics.

During the nineteenth century a strong sense of British national identity was established, but this did not alter the fact that Scots continued to identify themselves as *Scottish* and saw their country as a *partner* of England in colonization. What is especially significant for understanding the special nature of Scottish nationalism is that the Scottish elite was not interested in acting as the opposition to London, for example in bringing up the questions of constitutional issues or the renegotiating of the Act of Union. In the long run this attitude led to the evolution of an idea that Robert Christian Thomsen calls “safe nationalism” (Thomsen 2000, 56). This manifested itself in celebrating Scottish culture and traditions, but did not deal with defining political goals.

The First World War and the peace treaties on the one hand diverted attention away from Scottish issues, but on the other hand it was a period in which the right of self-determination came to the foreground and several small nation-states appeared on the map of Europe. All these contributed to the fact that the Anglo-Irish treaty and the solution of the Irish kept the Scottish Home Rule on the agenda. From the early 1930s, because of the Great

Depression, constitutional issues became less important. During World War II, a great sense of 'Britishness' developed, while the 'Scottish' feature of the Scottish dual identity was pushed into the background.

In the interwar period a new actor appeared in Scottish political life: modern political nationalism established its official organisations. The National Party of Scotland was formed in 1928 and united with the Scottish Party in 1934 as the Scottish National Party (SNP). Initially the SNP's aims were to secure Home Rule and the reestablishment of the Scottish Parliament within the United Kingdom rather than independence. In the immediate post-war years the SNP had very limited political impact (Devine 1999, 325-326).

From the 1960s due to economic difficulties the economic credibility of the United Kingdom was questioned as never before. The Scottish economy was in trouble, because of its outdated structure. The dominant British streak of the Scottish identity started to be questioned in the sixties when the "Trinity" of Protestantism, the Empire and capital was undermined by decolonization, secularization and economic recession (Bond és Rosie 2000, 107-108). The economic crisis contributed to the first electoral success of the SNP at the post-war period. They gained support not as the party of independence or separatism, but as the party that could speak for Scotland against the "London parties." This attitude to the SNP mirrored the special Scottish identity, and the SNP came to be seen as a pressure group for Scottish interests (Bogdanor 1999, 124). However it would be a failure to explain the rise of the SNP only by protest votes. Because of its social democratic nature, the votes for the SNP were and are as much votes for continuing the social democratic welfare project in Scotland (Brown et al. 1998, 21).

Without the rise and electoral success of the SNP in the late 1960s and in the 1970s it is doubtful whether devolution would have gained such a prominent place on the political agenda of the UK (Finlay 2004, 328). All political parties committed themselves to a measure of Scottish self-government. Obviously, the reaction of Labour and the Conservatives to growing Scottish Nationalist support during this period can be interpreted less as an attempt to decentralize the government of the United Kingdom than as an elaborate tactical response to the complex relationship within and between the two parties (Leicester 1996, 613).

The Nationalists were given a further boost with the discovery of North Sea oil in 1966. Their share of the electorate rose dramatically over the next elections (1970, February 1974, October 1974). The strengthening of the SNP, the spread of nationalism occurred in the UK at a time when the oil of the Scottish coast was vital to the reorganisation of the British economy.

## 2. The Referendums of 1979 and 1997: Background and Analysis

The two referendums on a Scottish body of self-government are crucial points of twentieth century Scottish history. The results highlight the background of the gradual changes of the British party politics, economy and the slip in the Scottish dual identity.

To understand Scotland in the 1970s it is important to keep in mind that the first devolution bill was mostly prepared in London by politicians who misjudged the situation north of the border from several aspects. The idea of national assemblies in Wales and Scotland was proposed by *The Royal Commission on the UK Constitution* (Paterson 1998, 51-58). After the result of the general election of 1974 Harold Wilson took office as Prime Minister of a minority Labour government and acted on the proposals prepared by the Commission.

The first – *Democracy and Devolution: Proposals for Scotland and Wales* – and the second – *Our Changing Democracy* – White Paper on the issue by the Wilson government formed the basis of the Scotland and Wales Bill, which received the Royal Assent in 1978 (Paterson 1998, 92-96). The bill passed only with amendments. According to the “Ferres amendment” if any Commons’ vote on a matter devolved to Scotland were passed through the votes of Scottish MPs, a second vote is required to be taken two weeks after the first where the Scottish MPs were to be pressured not to participate. The second amendment, the so called “40% rule” or “Cunningham amendment,” stated that if less than 40% of the registered electorate vote ‘Yes,’ on the referendum about the Scottish and Welsh assemblies then the Scotland and Wales Act granting devolution would not take effect (Bogdanor 1999, 227).

By 1979 the public in Scotland became weary of the devolution issue while the parties were divided over it. Due to the nationalist misgivings, trade union misbehaviour, government unpopularity, defective organisation the referendum promised at best a very close result. The referendum held on 1 March 1979 resulted in a narrow victory for devolution (51.6%) on a turnout of 62.9% of the electorate. The outcome fell short of the 40% the Act required to be implemented (only 32.85% of the whole Scottish electorate voted Yes). Though the result was disastrous, it was not especially surprising: devolution carried the stigma of a failing government. Labour’s policy on devolution reflected a mixture of pressures and influences (Tanner 2006, 557). Devolution in the 1970s was, as I see, a mere phase in a political match at Westminster.

Indeed, there would have been no need for the referendum at all. Actually, referendums are not part of the usual British constitutional practice, and

all referendums held in the United Kingdom, in theory, are advisory only. Numerous other strategic and tactical mistakes can be listed: the Labour Party's inability to develop some widely acceptable form of decentralized governance; the division within the 'Yes' side; conflicting messages from the 'Yes' side reaching the voters and so on. The most eye-catching of these was the requirement for 40 per cent of registered electorate's support for the creation of a Scottish Parliament forced upon the government by Labour's own backbenchers (Scott 1991, 193-196).

In addition to these, the government was also forced to hold the referendum before the General Election to avoid synchronisation which would have made high participation in the referendum more likely (Bochel et al. 1981, 141). From a strategic point of view the lack of provision for the publication of campaign accounts, the absence of financial aid to the campaigns, the unorganized distribution of their leaflets by the Government and no publication of an explanatory leaflet handicapped the 'Yes' side. Although the fact that the relatively high support for devolution before the campaign started to decline during the campaign suggests that the 'No' side had simply better arguments. Besides, the 'No' campaign was better organized and was well financed from Scottish business circles that saw devolution as source of more bureaucracy and tax raising (Bochel et al. 1981, 141).

It also has to be emphasized that the referendum happened to be held at a time when support for the two parties most closely identified with the devolution policy—Labour and the SNP—were at a low ebb, but the Conservatives were unusually high in Scotland. For several reasons quite unconnected with devolution, mainly industrial unrest, Labour was put 20 percentage points behind of the Conservatives according to the polls. In the same period the SNP had declined steadily, and polls suggested that they would receive only about 20 percent of the Scottish vote. In contrast, the Tories, who were clearly identified with the 'No' side, were increasingly popular (Bochel et al. 1981, 141). This is highly important because the support for devolution seems to have been related to electors' party sympathy. Each and every opinion poll during the campaign reported a large majority of SNP voters willing to vote 'Yes', a majority for 'No' amongst the Conservatives, and a declining majority of Labour voters intending to vote 'Yes' (Bochel et al. 1981, 141). When governments take a certain position on a referendum issue voters usually use their referendum vote to indicate their approval or rejection of the government's policy (Fisher et al. 2003, 89-90).

The defeat of devolution was the immediate cause of the collapse of the Labour government, which was followed by eighteen years of Conservative rule. The new Conservative government, elected in May 1979, repealed the Scotland and Wales Act in June 1979. Although the Conservative Party

campaigned for a 'No' vote, they promised that they would introduce an improved measure with stronger powers. Nothing realized from this, the Tories used the small 'Yes' majority as a justification for taking no further action (Harvie 1994, 192-197).

The defeat of Labour's devolutionary Scotland Bill did not destroy the devolution movement. Indeed, in the years after 1979 it seemed to develop even greater political influence. One of the reasons for this was the electoral dominance of the Conservative Party throughout the 1980s and the 1990s in Britain and the impact of the Thatcherism on Scotland. Scotland has repeatedly voted for left-of-centre parties but has had to accept a series of Tory governments. The Conservative governments of these years introduced radical withdrawal from the public intervention in support of industry and carried through a number of measures, above all the Community Charge, which stimulated open hostility in Scotland (Devine 1999, 606).

On the first anniversary of the 1979 devolution referendum, 1 March 1980, an all-party *Campaign for a Scottish Assembly* (CSA) was established to renew the fight for devolution. Its aim was to bring together Labour, Liberal Democrats, the SNP and representatives of the civil society, but during the 1980s it ceased to reach its goal. The Conservative victory in 1987 eventually enforced a real cooperation of the Scottish MPs and civil organizations. The *Scottish Constitutional Convention* (SCC) was set up in 1989 and included 58 of Scotland's 72 MPs, Labour, Liberal Democrats, Nationalists, besides the representatives of the Churches, Unions and other civic groups. The Convention produced two reports, the first in 1990, *Towards Scotland's Parliament*. The second report developed a detailed plan for a Scottish Parliament and was published in 1995, with the title *Scotland's Parliament, Scotland's Right* (Bogdanor 1999, 197). This report contained proposals for the implementation of a devolution scheme, rather than arguments for and against devolution ("Scotland's Parliament, Scotland's Right" 2006).

Nevertheless, referring to Scottish historical distinctiveness and the right of peoples to self-determination it set out the case for the reestablishment of the Scottish Parliament ("Scotland's Parliament, Scotland's Right" 2006). One of the most effective arguments of the proposal was economic subsidiarity, but at the same time it opposed secession from the United Kingdom in political terms ("Scotland's Parliament, Scotland's Right" 2006).

The Labour Party manifesto for May 1997 general election contained the devolution policy presented in the SCC reports ("Labour Party Manifesto 1997..." 2007) and after winning the elections the new Labour government of Tony Blair published its detailed plan for Scottish devolution in the White Paper *Scotland's Parliament*, in July 1997. This proposed the establishment

of a Scottish Parliament with domestic law-making and taxation powers (“White Paper–Scotland’s Parliament” 2006).

Labour’s tactic was to disarm English parliamentary criticism of devolution by a referendum on the issue. Unlike 1979, this referendum was held before the relevant devolution bill was introduced into Parliament, not after it had been enacted. This was to ensure that devolution was the expressed will of the people of Scotland and not simply a government policy. The referendum held on 11 September 1997 had a positive outcome for the two propositions: 74.3% supported the establishment of the Scottish Parliament and 63.5% agreed that the new Scottish Parliament should have tax-varying powers as well (Bogdanor 1999, 199).

This was followed by the establishment of a new constitutional settlement in Britain. After this result, the Scotland Bill was introduced in Parliament in January 1998 and became law as the Scotland Act in November that year. The new Scottish Parliament was modelled after the Westminster Parliament and consists of 129 members, 73 directly elected on constituency basis, and 56 additional members. It has the power to make law for Scotland in devolved areas: health, education, re-education, local authorities, traffic, social work, economic development, legal system, protection of the environment, agriculture, sport and arts. The issues that are concerned with the UK remained at Westminster, e.g. foreign policy, defence and national security, fiscal economy and monetary policy (“Scotland Act 1998” 2008).

### **3. Democratic Deficit, Europeanization, New Nationalism?**

When comparing the results of the referendums of 1979 and of 1997 several questions emerge. Why was the referendum in 1979 unsuccessful and why was the one in 1997 successful? Which political factors were fateful? Why was the electorate’s attitude different in 1997 to 1979? To answer these questions several points have to be taken into consideration.

In the first place, the political background must be investigated. In the 1970s devolution was primarily an attempt to settle the Nationalists without seriously changing the status quo. The introduction of the devolution bill and the referendum of 1979 took place in an unstable political climate. After the elections in February 1974 Harold Wilson could only establish a minority Labour government. Wilson needed the support of the nine nationalist MP’s as well as the fourteen Liberals, who were strongly supporting devolution, while the Labour manifesto did not contain any reference to devolution.

The government was therefore vulnerable to pressures from the Liberals, Scottish National Party and Plaid Cymru. Yet Labour won an overall majority of three MPs in October 1974, James Callaghan's government by 1977 had again no majority after a series of by-election defeats. The Scotland and Wales Bill gained a second reading only after the referendums in both places were conceded. On the Labour side, ten MPs voted against the bill, while forty-five abstained. It was highly noticeable that the governing party did not give complete support to its government's bill (Bogdanor 1999, 177-180).

It is not surprising that by 1979 the Scottish public was disillusioned with the struggle which preceded the referendum on devolution. Although Labour officially supported devolution, they were divided on the issue. While in London the Labour government backed devolution, prominent Scottish Labour MPs such as Robin Cook and Tam Dalyell launched the "Labour Vote No" campaign. The Tories despite the Declaration of Perth opposed any form of devolution. The SNP was agonizing over devolution; it provided something touchable, reachable on the short run, although the ultimate goal was independence (Brown et al. 1998, 21).

Due to the general division of the 'Yes' side there were no clear cut messages that could reach the electorate. This caused a huge gap between support for different kinds of self-government in general and the 'Yes' votes in the referendum of 1979, whereas this gap became minimal in 1997. The table below shows the referendum vote of the supporters of independence, devolution and self-government in 1979 and in 1997:

**Table 1.**

*1979: Did you vote in the recent referendum on Devolution for Scotland? If 'Yes' did you vote 'Yes' or 'No' | If no did you favour the 'Yes' side or the 'No' side?  
1997: How did you vote on the first question\*?*

|                           | Independence |      | Devolution |      | Self government |      |
|---------------------------|--------------|------|------------|------|-----------------|------|
|                           | 1979         | 1997 | 1979       | 1997 | 1979            | 1997 |
| Voted Yes                 | 68           | 75   | 46         | 65   | 49              | 70   |
| Didn't vote favoured Yes  | 12           | -    | 8          | -    | 8               | -    |
| (Total Yes)               | (80)         | (75) | (51)       | (65) | (57)            | (70) |
| Didn't vote no preference | 8            | 23   | 7          | 28   | 7               | 25   |
| Didn't vote, favoured No  | 2            | -    | 11         | -    | 10              | -    |
| Voted No                  | 10           | 2    | 28         | 7    | 26              | 5    |
| (Total No)                | (12)         | (2)  | (39)       | (7)  | (36)            | (5)  |

*Note: \*Should there be a Scottish parliament in the UK? Sources: Scottish Election Study 1979, Scottish Referendum Study 1997. (Dardanelli 2005a, 332)*



Apart from this the SNP's campaign for an independent Scotland caused tension between attitudes to devolution and independence. While devolutionists insisted on distinguishing themselves from those who wanted independence, they often used the principle that supported the case of independence: the right to self-determination. Devolutionists preferred the status quo to independence in 1979 and vice versa in 1997 (Dardanelli 2005a, 338).

Secondly, aside from the political division Scotland was in a problematic economic period and this proved to be a potent argument against devolution. In the 1970s the discovery of North Sea oil gave greater support to the economy of the USA than to that of Scotland (Finlay 2004, 333). At a time when the UK was to face one crisis after another the Scottish electorate was more concerned with jobs and living standards than with devolution. Scots worried about distancing themselves from the UK and the economic stability of the common British market, in such an era when the European Community was not stable enough to provide the economic security that Scotland needed (Dardanelli 2005b, 172).

The political and economic climate in 1997 was very different from 1979. On the one hand the Tory governments had severely alienated the Scots in political and in economic terms as well. On the other hand the parties of the Scottish Constitutional Convention managed to reach an agreement on key issues. This created a united pro-devolution standpoint in the Labour and the Liberal Democrat Parties, and later on in the SNP. In particular Scottish Labour shifted from support for a weak assembly in the 1970s to the viewpoint that only a devolved Scottish parliament with the right of legislation could have protected Scotland from Thatcherism in the 1980s. The other major difference was that devolution was seen as one of the most important platforms of the new Labour government itself in 1997. One of the reasons for this sensitivity of New Labour to the devolution issue was the Scottish dominance that emerged within the party by the end of twentieth century (Stenhouse 2004, 41). The change within the Labour Party is matched by changes in the wider political context (Taylor and Thomson 1999, 174-180).

It is also important to emphasize that all previous Home Rule and devolution bills, except for the Ireland Act of 1920, were introduced in parliaments where the government was dependent upon nationalist votes. The Labour government of 1997, in contrast, was absolutely independent of nationalist votes. On the contrary, it had a majority of 177 seats, the largest majority that Westminster has had since 1935 (Bogdanor 1999, 201). The referendum of 1997 took place while the new government and Tony Blair as PM were quite popular especially in Scotland. This influenced the final result of the referendum of 1997 in a positive way: support for the devolution issue



in Scotland can be seen as an approval of the Blair government's policy as well (Fisher et al. 2003, 88-89).

As for the Scottish economy, it touched the bottom in the early 1980s and from the mid 1980s saw a complete metamorphosis: from an industrial economy, it gradually became a modern, high-tech economy with a prosperous future. Together with Ireland, Scotland proved to be one of the most attractive locations in Europe for inward investment. Still, the main powerhouses of growth in Scotland were the financial services. Edinburgh emerged as one of the most important financial centres in Western Europe. Scots started to believe in Scotland again: they are just as viable as Ireland (Finlay 2004, 380-385).

Accompanying the accumulating economic and social tension and the doubtless negative effects of the democratic deficit in Scotland, the growing importance of the EU also contributed to the success of the referendum of 1997. On the one hand, the progression of the EU influenced the economic efficiency of the UK. In addition, the EU started to substitute the UK as the larger entity that could provide economic and financial security for Scotland. On the other hand, the European context changed the Scottish electorate's attitude towards independence (as a possible consequence of devolution): it was preferred to the status quo in 1997 because it would have taken place in the EU. The dramatic rise in the support for independence was mainly due to the SNP's embrace of the EU and the positive example of Ireland's membership (Paterson 1998, 196-205) and the positive example of Ireland's membership of the EU. The latest suggested that Scotland could hope not only for economic benefits, but also for the increase of its influence as an independent member of the EU (Salmond 1998, 72). For nationalists in Scotland the EU implies the end of the UK as a single country. In their view the EU is moving towards a "Europe of Regions." In this interpretation the smaller countries of the UK no longer need to belong to a single state for security or for economic stability (Fisher et al 2003, 129).

The EU is not only attractive for the Nationalists, but also for the supporters of limited self-government. For Labour and the Liberals, the key point was *subsidiarity*: the EU principle that decisions should be taken at the lowest level. Devolution from this aspect tends to strengthen democracy since it brings decision making closer to the citizens (Guibernau 2007, 54). Besides, the constitutional issues the EU's social policy supports a welfare-state consensus that Scotland seems to favour. As far as the position of women, the rights of workers and public spending on social infrastructure were concerned, the EU Commission was in conflict with the UK Conservative Government and hence seemed an ally to many politicians in Scotland (Brown et al. 1998, 22-23).

The all-pervasive nature of the EU can be detected in different segments of life: politics, economy, and also in the fields of identity creation. The growing

importance of supra-state membership has had deep impacts in the interplay of the Scottish-British dual identity (Moreno 2006, 7). It is noteworthy that the number of those who identified themselves as Scottish has risen significantly since the late seventies. Whereas over one-third of the respondents opted for 'British', and over half 'Scottish' in 1979, by 1992 only a quarter considered themselves 'British,' and almost three-quarters 'Scottish' (Paterson et al. 2001, 105-106). This suggests that in the years of Conservative rule, with the appearance of the Europeanization the sense of Scottish identity was intensified and did not fall back to previous levels.

In Scotland European identity—and a more positive attitude to the process of Europeanization—has been underlined in contrast to that south of the border (Moreno 2006, 9). Besides, Scottish preferences for Europe were illustrated by a *cultural shift* that appeared at the first time since the Union with England. No longer was England admired as the source of new ideas, Brussels became the new cultural point of comparison for Scots. This slow reorientation of Scotland towards the EU and away from Britain can still be seen nowadays (Brown et al. 1998, 124-126). Above this shift a new vitality occurred in Scottish culture from the 1980s which contributed to preference for devolution. The Gaelic culture and Scottishness in general were celebrated and younger generations of Scots started to feel confident about their own national identity (Devine 1999, 608).

The effort to stimulate a sense of Scottishness was only the first step; the second step was more difficult: to convince Scots that this identity had a positive and political meaning. Scottish identity gradually gained more political content and contributed to the beneficial atmosphere in Scotland when the second referendum took place in the 1990s (Mitchel 1996, 25).

To summarize, it can be argued that the growing influence of Europeanization contributed to the revival of the ethno-territorial feature of Scottish compound nationality, thus leading to higher demand for political autonomy and finally to the success in the referendum of 1997. It is important to emphasize that the external dimensions had a crucial impact, while intensifying the effects of the democratic and social deficit of Thatcherism, the economic, political difficulties and the rise of Scottish nationalism, on the change of support for devolution between 1979 and 1997.

## Conclusion

It has been argued that the Scottish campaign for self-government or independence is one of the world's oldest national movements. As such it

has changed a lot through the centuries and now it is flourishing as never before and reached its major triumph in 1997. This resulted in the emphatic endorsement of a Scottish parliament in the 1997 referendum. Nevertheless, the route to the success of the referendum in 1997 was far from being one-way or unambiguous. Being 'British' and 'Scottish' at the same time determines the Scottish national movement even today. In the context of the British Empire the Treaty of Union had envisaged Scottish identity being preserved through her legal system and system of church government. In the modern world Scottish identity is determined far more by the institutions of government than by the legal system or the church. In the twentieth century a need emerged for measures on government level that provide for real Scottish distinctiveness. This need culminated in the referendums of 1979 and 1997.

The results of the referendums have shed light upon the fluid nature of Scottish identity. During the two decades after the unsuccessful referendum of 1979 the strengthening of the Scottish national identity, the influence of the European Union, domestic politics of the United Kingdom's governments together led to the establishment of a political climate beneficial for the new referendum. The breakthrough of 1997 and the reestablishment of the Scottish Parliament are interpreted differently in traditional political circles and in the SNP. From the first point of view, Scottish devolution can be seen as means of renegotiating the terms of the Union, so as to make them more responsive to Scottish opinion, while from the SNP's point of view it is seen as the first step towards independence (Bogdanor 1999, 118-119). According to the SNP, an independent Scotland would not be isolated in a European context but it would be an active member of the EU, abandoning some of its sovereignty not to the UK, but to that wider Union (Brown 1998, 215). This program fits into the European idea of regionalism and subsidiarity where sovereignty is redefined in such a way that a monolithic democracy breaks down to permit a redistribution of power as new political structures are formed at the regional level (Brown et al., 231).

However, the creation of the Scottish parliament established an asymmetrical political structure in the UK by recognizing Scotland as distinct from other areas of Britain. This asymmetrical structure born with devolution has become a highly contentious issue which automatically provokes passionate reactions (for example the West Lothian Question) (Brown 1998, 217-218). But only this kind of political autonomy, which is regarded as an intermediate option between simply acknowledging the cultural specificity of a region and the sharing of sovereignty in a federation, could offer an acceptable alternative for some "nations without states," if they are to be discouraged from seeking independence.

The latest opinion polls show that devolution does not fully satisfy self-governance claims, but it does tend to weaken them. Devolution in itself cannot save the Union, but it seems clear that the United Kingdom's future will depend on how the Parliaments in Edinburgh and in London perform. The other influential factor will be the EU's attitude to the ambitions of the "nations without states." Thus in the twenty-first century, Scotland could easily opt for independence versus Union in the "Europe of Regions".

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# Is there a Doctor in the House?

## The Examination of an Idiosyncratic Interpretative Approach

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The aim of this paper is to examine and recognize the unique nature of the interpretative process that can be witnessed in the popular TV-series *House MD*. Combining the methodological approaches of the main trends of detective fiction with post-structuralist reading techniques, House and his team can succeed where other doctors have already failed.

### Introduction

First of all I would like to give a very brief overview of this series. The main character Gregory House MD the head of the Department of Diagnostic Medicine at the Princeton-Plainsboro Teaching Hospital in New Jersey. He has a rather awkward approach to his patients and to other people in general. His misanthropic behavior can be witnessed in his basic assumption which also became the motto of this TV show: "Everybody lies." House and his team of highly specialized doctors only work on cases that could not be solved by any other diagnostician: very special and rare occurrences of odd diseases and conditions. Each episode focuses on a single case beside a long term plot that characterizes the given season. The methods used to diagnose and treat the patient are sometimes dangerous and raise questions about ethics. Most of the time the choices made by House prove to be right but sometimes it seems to be sheer luck that leads to the solution. Gregory House's sole concern is to solve the case itself, curing the patient just happens as a byproduct. In this sense House is not like an ordinary doctor, he does not cure patients, he solves medical mysteries.

The main section will establish the analogy between the figure of the detective and the diagnostician. Besides the numerous stylistic and methodological similarities, the most important basis of this analogy is the shared role of these two figures: interpretation. I will pinpoint these interpretative similarities with the reading strategy represented by the classic British detective genre, the hard-boiled approach and the anti-detective model. The combination of these main trends of detective fiction will form the core of the interpretative approach utilized in *House MD*. The works of Tamás Bényei and Stefano Tani proved to be extremely helpful in examining the structural and methodological features of the genre of detective fiction.

The second main section examines one side of the interpretational process: the doctors. Is it only teamwork, the common cause and difference in opinions and personal traits that makes this particular team so successful or is there something more behind this? House finds delight in using metaphors to code his thoughts/ideas forcing his subordinates to flex their minds just to decipher the surfacing pieces of the medical mystery at hand. I claim that a metaphor can be applied to uncover the cause of their success. The members of this interpretative community take on the form of the object of their examination: the body of the patient. They are organized into a structure that bears close resemblance to a living *organism*. I gathered the necessary information about the function and structure of the various organs and systems in focus of my research using the renowned essential guide to the human anatomy *Gray's anatomy*. The article "Structure, Sign and Play" by Jacques Derrida helped me to determine the ambiguous position of Gregory House in the above mentioned *organism*.

In the third main section the focus of my research will shift to the other side of the interpretational process: the patient. Can one look at a human being as a *text* that has to be deciphered and interpreted to be able to help that individual? Or is it impossible and unacceptable to reduce a living person to a mere list of signs? The third chapter weighs the *raison d'être* of both positions and gives justification to my final assumption: a precise combination of the above mentioned positions is in play. *A bioetika alapjai* by Dr. József Kovács provided the necessary information about the field of medical ethics, one of the possible approaches and Charles W. Morris' theories of semiotics as presented in *A jel tudománya* by Horányi and Szépe provided insight into the other possible approach.



## 1. From Detective to Diagnostician

House is combining methodological elements that proved to be efficient either in the classic British model (the use of logic, being detached from the case itself), or in the American hard-boiled model (raising doubts, breaking the rules if necessary, and gathering a lot of first-hand information on the patient), or in postmodern anti-detective fiction (experimenting with the strict structure of detective fiction to examine theoretical assumptions about literature itself).

The detectives of the anti-detective genre are condemned to fail. It is impossible for them to tackle all the deviations from the classic structure of the genre. No matter how skilled or determined the protagonist is, he fails on his own.

But even his skills alone are not enough to solve every medical mystery he encounters. No matter how exceptionally great House is at his profession, he never solves the cases all by himself. He needs his team of “overqualified specialists” to aid him in the process. But his team is incapable of solving a mystery without the leading figure – House – as well. For example in the eighteenth episode of the third season when House encounters a case while at a remote location (an airplane where using mobile phones is out of the question as well) he uses three complete strangers who take the role of his original team members (at least in their approach to House’s theories and not medically for the three people are completely unskilled). There are numerous examples for the incompetence of the team solving a case without House such as the tenth episode of season two or the tenth episode of season three. House and his team are in a mutual relationship realizing a new, possibly successful approach to detection.

Teamwork is a commonly used method in the field of medicine. Due to the enormous amount of technical and theoretical knowledge one has to acquire in order to be able to recognize and treat conditions and illnesses in his given specific field, it would be impossible for one person to hold all that information alone. So the theme of medical mystery proposes a new approach to the method of detection in general. Employing teamwork and combining the methods of the earlier two models, the members of the team act as a symbiotic *organism*.

## 2. From Organization to Organism

In this main section I will examine one side of the interpretative process: the doctors. Is it only teamwork, the common cause and difference in opinions

and personal traits that makes this particular work unit so successful or is there something more behind this matter? House finds delight in using metaphors to code his thoughts/ideas forcing his subordinates to flex their minds deciphering the surfacing pieces of the medical mystery at hand. A metaphor can be applied to uncover the cause of their success. The aim of this chapter is to explain the nature and set-up of this structure.

The team with its participants can be looked at as a unified *organism*. The different doctors function together just like parts of a body in order to reach the collective goal: finding the only accurate answer to the question presented to them. This primal image represents a basic cornerstone of human thinking. The anthropomorphic image of team effort presupposes the functionality of this phenomenon. The building blocks are only capable of performing simple tasks, but collocated into an exquisite structure they become capable of performing complex actions that are needed to archive the higher goal. This team of highly trained specialists covers all the major diseases and conditions that pose the greatest threat to human life according to the statistics: *Leading Causes of Mortality Throughout the World*, 2002 issued by the World Health Organization.

This idea can be best witnessed in the final episode of the second season, after House is shot by the husband of a patient he once treated and he lapses into a coma. Through his visions while in the comatose state the bond between House and his team members is elevated to the level of concretization: the members of the team function as a whole. In his visions House knew what the other members of his team wanted to say even before they said anything due to them being only products of his imagination. Even in normal cases the members of his team function as an extension of House: providing more than one approach to a problem and as a control group. Although it is unquestionable that House is the central figure of this structure his questionable ascendancy over the other parts of the *organism* makes it presumable that his position in this structure is not conventional.

Each participant has a role in this *organism* that bears high resemblance to his/her field of research. On the following pages I would like to give a brief description of the members of staff in question instantiated with examples from the series to underline the parallel between their field of expertise and function in this *organism*.

The *organism* in the focus of this chapter consists of the doctors who regularly appear on the show. I will divide the participants into two distinct groups: the peripheral elements and the central element. Lisa Cuddy the Chief Administrator of the Princeton-Plainsboro Teaching Hospital, her field of specialization is endocrinology. Robert Chase specialized in cardiology and traumatology, Allison Cameron the immunologist and Eric Foreman the

neurologist working in House's team. Finally there is House's one and in fact only friend James Wilson who is the head of the Department of Oncology.

## 2.1 The Peripheral Elements

Allison Cameron is the immunologist of the team, immunology deals with the human body's defense system against infections and other foreign substances like fungi etc.

There is a clear analogy between the function and method of the immune system against an infection and the events that took place between Cameron and the rest of the team. One of the main story lines of the first season of *House MD* was the nascent love relationship between Cameron and House. Completely disagreeing with House's unethical and sometimes dangerous methods, Cameron still felt a strange form of affection towards him. Again on the level of a metaphor this can be interpreted as the reaction of the immune system to an infection, the anti-bodies are attracted to the foreign substances in order to bind with them and counteract the threat. Cameron wanted to "domesticate" House, she thought that all House needed was a woman in his life, that his loneliness was the sole cause of his misery and awkward behavior. She took the same course of action with Chase and Foreman as well when their morality was compromised due to House's influence or personal reasons. Cameron's other interesting attribute is that she seems to be unable to get infected. On two occasions she was exposed to contagia: in the seventh episode of the second season an *HIV* patient coughed blood on her face, into her mouth and eyes and in the twentieth episode of the second season Foreman breaks her skin with a needle that is contaminated with *Naegleria parasites*. On both occasions Cameron remains uninfected.

Robert Chase whose fields are cardiology and traumatology presents two seriously different demeanors in reference to the patients. While with the patient he is highly likeable, the charming good looking young doctor keen on helping, when the patient is not present he lets his deeper feelings show giving way to the sarcasm. Chase has been employed by House for the longest period of time out of the three employees. He was exposed to House's presence for such a long time that he got traumatized by his ideas. Chase's other field of expertise is cardiology, a branch of medical studies focusing on the heart and its possible defects due to genetic or environmental causes. On the level of the metaphor Chase fulfils the role of the heart of the organism. The heart provides a continuous blood circulation through the cardiac cycle and is one of the most vital organs in the human body. It bears significant symbolic value as well. The heart was considered to be the residing place of the human soul and morals in early and pre-modern cultures, as a wide

variety of idioms used even in contemporary everyday conversations remind us.

The last member of the team is Eric Foreman, certified neurologist, the voice of rationality in the group. He has a similar approach to medical problems as House but he is different in his approach to the patients. Foreman has doubts about the whole character of House and the view he impersonates. Foreman knows that the method works better than any other method he is familiar with, he just does not want his views of medical issues affect his personal life and moral values.

According to *Gray's Anatomy* the nervous system is the essential means of an organism to "interact continually with the fluctuating environment without loss of structural integrity", (Williams 1989:860) thus ensuring the survival of the species through successful adaptation. The nervous system can be divided into two sub-systems: the *Central Nervous System* (CNS) and the *Peripheral Nervous System* (PNS). The CNS consists of the *brain* and the *spinal cord*, while the PNS comprises the *cranial nerves* and the *spinal nerves*. The *brain* extracts the largest possible amount of information from the input of the *sensory division* through the PNS, integrates that information to select responsive actions. These actions can be immediate actions (e.g.: response to an immediate threat) or ongoing patterns (e.g.: adaptation to the day/night cycle). Finally the brain parcels out components of the task to functional subsystems. These sub-tasks are then forwarded via impulses conducted by the spinal cord through the PNS to either the cardiac muscles, smooth muscles, glands or the skeletal muscles.

In terms of personal traits Foreman possesses ideal skills and attributes to have a central role in this *organism* and to become the central element of a similar *organism* someday. His outstanding insight into medical questions and the professionalism he shows during the cases, combined with the skills and approach he picked up from House make him an exceptionally important part of the *organism*. Foreman also handles those situations where he has to take charge due to the absence of House. He proceeds using a similar procedure to the one the nervous system uses to fulfill its role. He gathers as much information about the patient and his/her condition as possible, he processes that information and chooses a course of action, and then he assigns the various subtasks to his peers (subsystems) and organizes the execution of the task.

Lisa Cuddy, Dean of Medicine, Chief Administrator of the Princeton-Plainsboro Teaching Hospital is responsible for the actuation of the whole facility. Every decision has to get her approval before initiated. She supervises the departments in terms of expenses and staff matters, she assigns the cases to House and his team and only she has the power, being House's superior to stop him if he goes too far. Her field of specialization is endocrinology: a

branch of medicine that focuses on disorders of the endocrine-system and its secretions called hormones. The following definition gives a little insight into the functions of the endocrine system. According to Hadley:

All multicellular organisms need „coordinating systems to regulate and integrate the function of differentiating cells.“ Two mechanisms perform this function in higher animals: the nervous system and the endocrine system (Hadley 2000)

It is interesting in and of itself to see the close resemblance between the field of specialization Lisa Cuddy chose and her everyday practical tasks. Lisa Cuddy is incapable of impregnation even with the help of treatment and thus has doubts in her maternal capabilities. This fact is interesting because her condition is clearly hormonal, coinciding with her field of research and her doubts about her ability of being responsible and superior question the same skills she needs in her position at the hospital. She cannot control House so she manages him: maximizing his efficiency and minimizing the damage done by him.

Finally, James Wilson the head of the Department of Oncology, House's best and in fact only friend. The creator of the series intended to make Wilson a "Watson figure" a sidekick for House, or more so a companion. Wilson's position in the team is unique in that he is seldom affected by House. He has no grip on Wilson who is an outsider just like House. An observer who is there when and where the events take place but who is not affected by them the way the other members of the team are. Wilson can be looked at as a mass in the system, a *benign tumor*, he is in close proximity but in terms of function he is omissible.

Every structure needs a centre point, in relation to with what the other elements of the structure can align and gain meaning. In this *organism* House is this central figure, though he remains incapable of functioning alone. Yet, he is superior to the other doctors who are part of the team.

## 2.2 The Center

Gregory House is a certified diagnostician with a double speciality of infectious disease and nephrology - a field of medicine that focuses on the functions and possible illnesses of the kidneys - the head of the Department of Diagnostic Medicine. According to the statistics of the WHO communicable diseases are responsible for about thirty-two percent of the mortality rates. Almost one third of the conditions that are highly likely to lead to the death of the patient are infections. The key role of his fields make House the central figure of the team.

In the previous chapter I dealt with House's awkward approach to people in some detail, drawing a parallel between his figure and that of the detective. What I did not deal with is his influence on his team members. He advocates his employees to apply a way of conducting people and an approach to ethical issues similar to his own. On the level of a metaphor House acts like an infection in terms of the influence he has on the other members of the team. House sizes up his colleagues, creates their elaborate profiles, then penetrates their code of conduct in matters of right and wrong with the prodigious efficiency of his otherwise questionable approach. Finally, he replicates himself using the appropriate host.

The hermeneutic technique House uses can be summed up in the following simple way. He receives the information, and then filters those pieces of information through his own ethical standpoint and professional knowledge. After the filtration, the relevant information is included in the formulation of the diagnosis. The ones that do not pass the filtration get thrown out as being irrelevant. In fact, this technique is very similar to a simplified depiction of the process that takes place in the kidneys. The passage of water from the *blood* to the *urinary space* contains various dissolved molecules and the kidneys filter this substance. A large part of the filtrate is still useful to the body and it is reabsorbed, while the useless part is secreted and excreted.

Gregory House is an omniscient professional. He is considerably proficient in many fields besides nephrology and infectology such as: geography, philosophy, sociology, anthropology, history and psychology. Declining consensus with society enables House to take the approach that is successful. He deliberately refuses any means of reintegration into society. Time after time various individuals tried to exert an influence on House using approaches that range from seduction to intimidation.

However, neither the possibility of dismissal by his superior, nor the promise of carnal pleasures from an attractive employee, not even the chance of true love, nor the threat of incarceration could coerce House into developing even the slightest inclination to reintegration into society.

A minor detour is in order to the terminology of detective fiction to explain House's demeanor. House's complete and utter refusal of reintegration into society is a brilliant exemplification of the argument of Robin Woods essay "His Appearance Is Against Him."

the fictional detective himself became an outcast, a link between crime and society who, by the nature of his task, had to work alone in order to protect his community from the taint of criminality. (Woods 15-24)

Although Gregory House is not a detective in the strict sense of the word, the methods he uses and his general goal are analogous with those of a private

investigator as we have seen in the first chapter of this essay. It is obvious that the merits of using the hermeneutics of detective fiction leave him prone to the drawbacks that are the allotments of the protagonists of the genre.

In order to be able to function House has to maintain a marginal position in society: he is compelled to be an outsider, to be miserable. This issue is addressed in the conversation between House and his patient the talented jazz musician John Henry in the ninth episode of the first season.

House: And that's all you are? A musician?

John Henry: I got one thing, same as you.

House: Really? Apparently, you know me better than I know you.

John Henry: I know that limp. I know the empty ring finger. And that obsessive nature of yours, that's a big secret. You don't risk jail and your career just to save somebody who doesn't want to be saved unless you got something, anything, one thing. The reason normal people got wives and kids and hobbies, whatever. That's because they ain't got that one thing that hits them that hard and that true. I got music, you got this. The thing you think about all the time, the thing that keeps you south of normal. Yeah, makes us great, makes us the best. All we miss out on is everything else. No woman waiting at home after work with the drink and the kiss, that ain't gonna happen for us.

On the other hand House cannot function alone, he needs a host, his team of overqualified specialists to aid him. For example in the eighteenth episode of the third season when House encounters a case while at a remote location – aboard an airplane where using mobile phones is out of the question as well – he uses three complete strangers who take on the role of his original team members in terms of their reactions to his theories. House is in a grotesque situation: he needs his team to solve his cases but he is also compelled by the demand of the conventions of the genre his character is rooted in to marginalize himself to a plane outside human relationships.

The problem of being the center of a given structure and taking a position that is outside the same structure cannot by far be called a neoformation. Jacques Derrida tackled this phenomenon in his essay “Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of Human Sciences.”

Thus it has always been thought that the center, which is by definition unique, constituted that very thing within a structure which governs the structure, while escaping structurality. This is why classical thought concerning structure could say that the center is, paradoxically, within the structure and outside it. (Derrida 278)



House takes a similar position in the *organism* consisting of his immediate colleagues. On the one hand, he is the most important element, far more skilled than the others with access to methods his employees and peers cannot utilize. He is the head of the Department of Diagnostic Medicine, he makes the decisions, the others have a voice in the debate leading to those decisions, but the final word is always his. On the other hand, he is like an infection attacking the *organism*, accruing from a different plane than the elements of the *organism* he invades and corrupts. He is a constructive and destructive force at the same time.

### 3. From Body to Text

#### 3.1 The Alternatives

As aforesaid in the previous chapter, the team of doctors whose goal is to diagnose the patient take on the form of the object of their examination. They establish a structure that is highly analogous to a human *body* in terms of architecture and functionality. As I also established in the first chapter of this paper, there is a methodological parallel between the course of the hermeneutical process in detective fiction and the diagnosis in *House MD*. Therefore the well established and avowed connection between the detective/crime and the interpreter/text is safe to be extended between the diagnostician and the interpreter of a text. Taking this into account one has to consider the possibility of the necessity of looking at a patient as if she were a *text*.

The first necessary step is to conduct a close examination of the differences between *body* and *text*. I will use the clean-cut distinction between *work* and *text* established by Roland Barthes in his essay "From Work to Text" to demonstrate the difference between *body* and *text* in *House MD*. In his essay Barthes distinguishes the physical object, the book that can be held in hand or put on a shelf (*work*), from the string of words, signs that the reader of the book interprets during the reading process (*text*). A clear analogy can be witnessed between his claims describing the *work* and the object of the diagnoses, the *body*, while the *text* has apparently the same characteristic features in both cases.

According to Barthes the *work* "closes upon a signified" (Barthes 237) this way justifying the assumptions about the existence of a single adequate meaning of a literary work, due to its own moderately symbolic, finite nature. In the case of *House MD* this statement can be interpreted to presuppose the



possibility of figuring out the condition that causes the symptoms of the patient. When diagnosing a patient, searching for the one adequate answer that fits the combination of symptoms seems to be the only rational approach. Barthes states that the *work* “refers to an image of an organism” (Barthes 239) referring to the structural features of a literary work that consists of a beginning, the end and the middle in between, conglomerating in a unitary structure. In the light of my research this statement underlines the parallel I drew between the *work* and the *body*: they both appear to be organic wholes that require an approach based on a set of protocols.

The *text* on the other hand “practices an infinite postponement of the signified” (Barthes 2006: 238), meaning that a single adequate meaning does not exist, or at least it cannot be grasped due to the lack of permanent closure of the signifying process. It offers countless meanings dependent on various different factors instead. While in the process of formulating a diagnosis, the doctors encounter a rather similar obstacle: one diagnosis follows another without the certainty of reaching the ultimate result.

The *text* is radically symbolic and metonymic in nature, an “activity of associations, contiguities, cross references coincides with a liberation of symbolic energy”. (Barthes 238) A team effort is required to decipher the combination of symptoms the patient has, each individual participant finds a different grip – favoring their field of expertise – on the situation and thus has a different assumption regarding the solution of the enigma. The majority of the tests and examinations conducted by the medical team turn out to be inconclusive, subject to interpretation and cross-checking the other participants’ explanation of the results. According to Barthes the *text* “recuperates *work* as play, task, production, practice”. (Barthes 239) The *text* in itself is an attempt to cure the *work* through turning it into a kind of play, a task, a practice. The diagnosis is the way to heal the *body* through the task and practice of interpreting the *text*.

The last claim by Barthes that I have found very useful and descriptive of the diagnostic process in *House MD* is this: “the Text requires an attempt to abolish the distance between writing and reading”. (Barthes 236-241) In my understanding, this statement can be looked at as a demand to abolish the distance between the patient’s condition and the diagnosis. In other words, as I described earlier, the medical team performing the diagnosis needs to adapt to the object of their examination, thus they establish a structure analogous to a *body*. This is done by considering the body of the patient as a textual phenomenon, a dataset to be interpreted in order to penetrate or see *through* (dia) her skin to gain *knowledge* (gnosis) about the patient. While liberating it for free textual interpretation, the doctors take on the characteristics of the patient’s body.

Another level of adaptation can be witnessed when applying Barthes' claim in a more narrow sense: the doctor has to be sick himself to be able to find out what the patient is suffering from. This idea has been emphasized on the show *House MD* on numerous occasions. For example in the last episode of the second season, when supposedly House underwent a *Ketamine* treatment to cure the nerve damage in his leg, his reasoning skills were compromised due to the effect of *Ketamine* on his brain. His leg was fine but he was not able to function properly in connection with his case. The constant leg pain and state of misery are the most characteristic features of Gregory House. This differentiates him from the other doctors, in fact he is a sick person sharing attributes with the patient and his fellow doctors as well. His position is an excellent depiction of the marginal position of the detective living on the borderline between members of regular society and the criminals he hunts for. I think that it is necessary to pay particular attention to House's condition, for the abolition of distance between the patient and the doctor is the key component to the success of the interpretative process.

To determine whether or not House can be defined as sick/not healthy I used the chapter focusing on the definition of health and sickness from *A modern orvosi etika alapjai* by Dr. József Kovács. Talcott Parsons coined the socio-cultural definition of health states claiming that "the degree of health depends on the ability of the individual to accommodate to the norms and lifestyle of society." (Parsons 69) He also differentiates between sick individuals who are *not able* to accommodate to the standards of society and deviant individuals who are simply *not willing* to accommodate to the same standards. Based on Parson's definition House is not sick but deviant: his leg would not necessarily mean that he is *not able* to fulfill his role in society as a doctor. The resistance to integrate into society is a voluntary decision, he is *not willing* to accept the norms of society or to act according to them.

On the other hand, as Thomas Szasz states in his *The Manufacture of Madness*, there is no such thing as mentally ill people: it is all just a myth. He used an argument rooted in the differentiation between somatic and psychic aberrations to support his claim. Szasz states that in the case of somatic aberrations either a positive or negative aberration is considered problematic. For example, a person with only seven fingers would be considered different from the standard just the same way as a person with thirteen fingers. On the other hand, in the case of psychic aberrations only the negative aberration would be problematic and not the positive aberration. A serial killer or a sadist is obviously considered sick by members of society while a person who would perform an act of exceptional courage (risk his own life for complete strangers when running into a burning house to save them from death) would be considered a hero or a saint. The probability of an underlying condition being

responsible for his action can never be fully and unquestionably excluded. So according to Szasz, an individual is pronounced sick if that individual deviates from the well established standards of society either physically or mentally. Taking this statement into consideration, House's behavior defines him as a sick individual.

To clear any doubts concerning the infamous theory of Szasz I would like to use the definition of health issued by the World Health Organization "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." (WHO) House fails to fulfill multiple criteria of this definition. His Vicodin addiction compromises his mental health and his borderline misanthropic attitude toward other people deprives him of any chance of social well-being. Above all other defects his infirmity due to the massive muscle and nerve damage in his leg make him unquestionably not healthy. It is now absolutely clear that House can be considered similar to his patient in terms of health thus the distance between them is abolished enabling House to conduct a successful interpretation of the patient.

The adaptation to the patient takes place on two separate levels. The interpretative community as a whole takes on the form of the object of its examination and through House's physical and mental, social condition the distance between the diagnostician and the patient is completely abolished.

The result of applying Roland Barthes's "From Work to Text" to this particular model is that it is clear now that the patient can be looked at both as a *body* and as a *text*. The choice between *body* and *text* does not imply that the choice one made will be exclusively correct under any circumstances. For one, the *body* bears close resemblance to the *work* in terms of characteristic features and promises a desirable outcome for the diagnosis, the possibility of finding the correct answer. Yet the method of interpretation used by House and his team imply that they consider the patient a *text* as opposed to the conventional approach that is expected from doctors in a medical situation. I believe that both choices are correct under their own proper circumstances, but shifts have to be included in the diagnostic process to take maximum advantage of the applicable methods. The stability of the patient's status was questioned at the beginning of this chapter, now it is clear that it is plausible to look at the patient in two distinct ways her being either a *body* or a *text*. Questioning the stability of the status of the patient also implies shifts during the diagnostic process. In the following section I will conduct a close examination of an average case handed to House and his team and I will pinpoint these shifts and their effect on the interpretative process. How the patient is textualized during the process of the interpretation carried out by the sick *organism* constituted by the doctors.

### 3.2 The Process of Textualization

On the following pages I will carry out a close, step-by-step examination of a regular diagnostic process depicted in *House MD*. Analyzing every step of the process from the first appearance of the patient, through the time she spends in the hospital to the moment the patient is cured or at least treated and discharged. Certain shifts take place in the status of the patient at various points of the diagnostic process as the *body* gradually forfeits its bodily status and becomes a *text* returning to its original status only when cured. The aim of this section is to pinpoint these shifts and emphasize their importance. In order to do this I gathered the necessary background information on the subject of *medical ethics* from Dr. József Kovács's textbook: *A modern bioetika alapja: Bevezetés a bioetikába* (1999). This textbook is a definitive item on the reading list of courses in *medical ethics* at medical universities throughout Hungary.

When the patient first appears she is usually in an everyday, normal setting and there is rarely any sign of illness at all. It is obvious that she is an autonomous individual (*body*) at this point. The definition autonomy is: the ability to choose a course of action and follow that course without physical, psychological, internal or external limitations. Autonomy consists of three factors: the autonomy of thinking, the autonomy of will and the autonomy of action. If any of these three factors are absent,, the autonomy of the individual is not intact to start with, so it cannot be further compromised. At this point, the patient possesses all three of these factors being in control of her actions that are in accordance with her will based on her thinking. When the illness first presents itself, this order is disrupted. The illness deprives her of the previous degree of control over herself demanding immediate action to restore the situation to normal.

Once the patient is admitted to the hospital she has to go through the usual processing. A series of questions are asked by the medical staff of the hospital concerning her health: what are her symptoms, where does it hurt, when did the symptoms start, does she have any allergies, is she on any kind of treatment or has she been to another doctor and if yes, then what was the diagnosis of the other doctor, etc. A series of simple tests are performed: blood test, urine test for example. What happens at this point is that this autonomous individual is mapped by the medical staff and the data collected are used to produce her chart. All the medically important data about the patient are printed on sheets of paper for further use during the diagnosis. The patient is scanned and printed: objectified, textualized. Her autonomy is still intact but the foundations of her textual status are laid down as well. The patient will be administered, categorized and sent to a doctor who is specialized in the field the illness fits into.

When House gets the case the patient is already in a dual state (*body / text*) she still has her free will and voice in the course of action she is willing to take. From House's perspective it is more desirable to look at the patient as *text*. House sways the situation to his own favor. The ratio of dealing with the patient face-to-face, versus examining her chart clearly underlines which choice House prefers: as little direct involvement with the patient as possible. Autonomy on the part of the patient is only an obstacle in the diagnostic process. House's goal is to find the right diagnosis that fits the patient's symptoms and to use that diagnosis to treat the illness. The patient's and her doctor's goals are identical, so House thinks it is absolutely not necessary to discuss all the steps of the diagnosis with the patient. The way House sees it, the patient's autonomy is compromised anyway: his standpoint is that every patient is an idiot and a liar. The patient could have prevented being in this situation had she been more careful or better informed and the patient is not proficient in medicine so why should her opinion count at all? In addition, patients tend to lie about embarrassing things in their lives even if their life is at stake. To sum up: from House's point of view the patient is not an autonomous individual from the moment she is admitted by the hospital, her autonomy of thinking (being an idiot) and autonomy of will (the will to stay alive) are compromised, thus her autonomy is next to non-existent. However, the patient has to give her consent to any and all medical procedures performed on her, so House is still compelled to deal with the patient as a human being (*body*) but only until he gets the consent. Lying, cheating, mocking and intimidating the patient are House's weapons of choice in order to reach his aim.

The most significant shift that take place during the diagnostic process is the patient giving House her *informed consent*. I will examine this point of the process in greater detail for this is the point when the shift from *body* to *text* can be best witnessed and explained. *Informed consent* is the most widely established and practically used fundamental principle of medical ethics, as opposed to the earlier practice when the patient had very little voice in the treatment the doctor recommended for her. The earlier practice required a *basic consent* from the patient. The attending doctor told the patient what procedure he thought was necessary and the patient, convinced that the doctor was aware of the risks and consequences of the procedure, gave her consent. In recent practice *informed consent* entails that the doctor informs the patient articulately of the possible risks, side-effects and long-term consequences of the treatment and also of any other possible procedures that can substitute for the procedure in question. If the patient is not giving her *informed consent*, the doctor is not permitted to go through with the procedure.

As Isaiah Berlin emphasizes the importance of autonomy in a short extract from his essay *Two Concepts of Liberty*: "I wish to be the instrument of my

own, not of other men's acts of will. I wish to be a subject, not an object." (1981) This passage embodies the patient's will to remain autonomous. To be treated as a human being rather than an object, from her point of view to be treated like a *body* and not a *text*. Being properly informed before giving the consent enables the patient to express her autonomy. House misinforms his patients thus depriving them from their autonomy. So while in a normal case the *informed consent* guarantees the autonomy of a patient, in House's case it means the exact opposite: it justifies House's approach to look at the patient as if she were a *text*.

From a semiotic angle *informed consent* can be examined as a pragmatic phenomenon. Similar to the way that the use of a shared language, a consensus between speakers by participating in a common language the individual may obtain its consciousness and self, giving an informed consent to House represents the voluntary disclosure of the patient's autonomy. According to Charles W. Morris something can only become a sign if an interpreter interprets it as a sign. This is exactly what the *informed consent* enables House to do, to interpret the symptoms of the condition of the patient as signs that can be traced back to arrive at the denotatum: the underlying condition of the patient. The *body* officially signs her own textualized representative correspondent as a last gesture before forfeiting her autonomy. Once the *informed consent* is given to House even the last obstacle – the partial autonomy of the patient – is tackled the patient is now devoid of her autonomy thus her being a *body*. The interpretative process can commence.

The adaptation between the patient and the doctors is established but they are in contradiction as well for the patient the textualization of her *body* is the objectification, while for the doctors this textualization aids them in expressing subjective argument of the patient such as the diagnosis that fits her symptoms.

### 3.3 Reading the TEXT: From Ethics to Semiotics

Medical ethics consist of the set of principles that guide and direct doctors while performing medical procedures. A brief examination of these principles should enable us to grasp the unconventional nature of House's ways of conduct fully. As the following examples show, reading the body as *text* first and foremost implies an act of liberation from ethical constraints: when moving freely in the body of the patient as a textual universe, House questions the foundations of medical ethics systematically in order to be able to perform a semiotic approach in each individual case. The four cornerstones of medical ethics are: the *Principle of Autonomy*, the *Principle of Non-maleficence*, the *Principle of Beneficence* and the *Principle of Justice*.

The *principle of Autonomy* confers about the respect of the patient's autonomy. As I discussed earlier, autonomy is the ability to choose a course of action and follow that course without physical, psychological, internal or external limitations. It consists of three factors: the autonomy of thinking, the autonomy of will and the autonomy of action. Whenever any of these three factors are compromised the autonomy of the individual ceases to be intact thus it cannot be violated. On the other hand according to John Stuart Mill: performing or denying a procedure is not justified without the patient consent even if the patient is daft, irrational or poses a threat to herself.

House abides only those parts of the principle of autonomy that serve his goals. He is aware of the autonomous nature of the *body* but given his general view on other human beings the patients are devoid of their autonomy immediately when he becomes their attending doctor. As I also discussed earlier, House's standpoint is that people are idiots and liars depriving themselves from autonomy. John Stuart Mill's statement is used to maintain the autonomy of the patients even under these circumstances but House neglects Mill's argument to justify his own preferred method.

The *Principle of Non-meficence* is the most important principle of medical ethics. *Primum non nocere* – first, do no harm, this requisite is the core of this principle. Actually, this requisite cannot be acquitted, every medical procedure carries a risk of the impairment of the patient and every medicine has side-effects. This principle is actualized through careful consideration of the good done to the patient and the harm caused to the patient in the process. If this risk is acceptable, the doctor can propose the procedure to the patient to get her *informed consent*. House often uses dangerous and painful procedures to diagnose and treat his patients. Taking risks is absolutely acceptable, even more: necessary if they lead to a successful diagnosis and treatment of the illness. House will misinform the patient to get her consent if necessary, neglecting the second component of this principle.

The *Principle of Benefice* is a combination of the *Principle of Non-meficence* and the general idea of preventing bad things from happening at all and doing good deeds. It is still the subject of debate whether it is the duty of every doctor to abide this principle or simply the ones who do should be respected for doing so. The most widely accepted interpretation of this principle is that the doctor is obliged to serve the interests of the patient and not his own. House chooses a different approach in this matter as well. He differentiates between interesting cases and not interesting ones. He applies this principle when he is diagnosing a patient with an uncanny condition: he does not spare his time and energy but desperately avoids boring cases. For example, he watches his favorite soap opera instead of treating the patients while on duty at the clinic.



The *Principle of Justice* focuses on the distribution of scarce resources like donor organs, tests involving delicate and expensive machinery in hospitals. The principle's guideline is to choose from a list of possible distribution policies based on equality, the needs, social conduciveness and merits of the patient along with the rules of the market. Obviously, a vital member of society has privileges compared to a convicted felon for example. House treats all his patients equally in terms of medical attention and access to scarce resources. Despite all this, all the other patients of the hospital are inferior to his patient in his eyes, he has no regard for their condition.

Modern medical ethics is founded on these four principles and abiding to them is the obligation of every doctor. Gregory House neglects and twists these principles to serve his needs.

The first part of the present sub-chapter examined the ways House defies and twists the principles of medical ethics. The principles of medical ethics protect the *body* of the patient while simultaneously ties down the doctors in their struggle for finding the correct explanation to the patient's condition. As opposed to this, semiotics concentrates solely on the process of finding that explanation. At this point we need to see where the foundations of House's semiotic approach come from and why he considers the act of medical diagnosis a semiotic process.

In fact as Thomas Sebeok instantiates in a chapter of his book *Signs An Introduction to Semiotics* the field of semiotics and medical science are entwined since ancient times. The concept of considering symptoms as signs was first studied in first half of the fifth century BC. Hippocrates, Aristotle and Platon also examined this assumption and the contributions of these "medical practitioners of the ancient world led to the foundation of semiotics as a branch of medical science." (1994:43.)

Based on the chapter of the book *A Jel Tudománya*. (Horányi özséb and Szépe : 1975) dedicated to Charles W. Morris' work in the field of semiotics it is safe to assume the following. Formulating a diagnosis is a medical process in the strict sense but it bears close resemblance to the interpretative process performed on texts. To explain this resemblance we may consider both as processes of semiosis. According to Charles W. Morris any process in which an element of the process functions as a sign can be called semiosis. The model of semiosis can be used to examine the interpretative process that takes place when House and his team are diagnosing the patient. Relying on Morrisian terminology, semiosis consists of four elements: the sign (the element that acts as a signifier), the denotatum (the object signified by the sign), the interpretant (the effect of the semiosis on the interpreter) and the interpreter (the agent of the semiosis).

In the case of *House MD* the sign is the set of symptoms of the patient's condition, the denotatum is the patient's condition, the interpretant is the



diagnostic process and the interpreter is the unified *organism* House and his team constitutes. The skills of medical profession are primarily concerned with one level of semiosis: semantics. Semantics is a branch of Semiotics that focuses on the relationship between the sign and its denotatum. Semantic rules determine the circumstances under which a sign can be used on an object or situation. Being familiar with the semantic rules of their own field of expertise is the function of the constituents of the *organism*. These specialists have to formulate presumptions about the condition of the patient based on her symptoms and the results of the tests performed on her. The various presumptions are cross-referenced and the ones that still seem plausible are carried into practice. The condition of the patient will change due to the procedure presenting a new set of signs to the *organism*. This new set of signs is then interpreted again resulting in new presumptions that are carried into practice as well until finally the presuppositions prove to be correct and the patient is diagnosed.

However, in most of the cases it is Gregory House who solves the enigma and not his team members. To understand the reason behind this fact the pragmatic angle of this semiotic process has to be examined. Pragmatics is a branch of Semiotics that focuses on the biotic (biological, psychological and social) nature of semiosis, the relationship between the sign and the interpreter. The concept of the interpreter is present in the definition of signs since Aristotle's *De Interpretatione*. According to Morris the interpretant is a custom of a living organism to react to objects not present but significant in a given situation due to a sign-vehicle as if they were present. The *organism* creates presuppositions based on the belief of the existence on the one adequate answer to explain the patient's symptoms although the precondition of the whole semiotic process denies the existence of such an answer. The patient has already become a *text* when giving her informed consent enabling her doctors to interpret her, but according to Barthes texts practice an infinite postponement of the signified. In other words, the method used by House and his team denies the existence of the goal of their method but Morris' argument enables them to hypothetically accept the existence of the one adequate answer. Morris also argues that although the sign implies its own interpretant it does not denote it. Although symptoms provide great help in diagnosing the condition of the patient, most symptoms or even constellations of symptoms can only imply various conditions. For example *fever* plus elevated *white blood cell count* implies some sort of infection but to determine the concrete kind of infection numerous other tests have to be performed. Or an elevated *erythrocyte sedimentation rate (ESR)* – the rate at which *red blood cells* precipitate in a period of an hour – is a not-specific measure of inflammation. It can imply a number of different conditions: *polymyagia rheumatica* (inflammatory condition of the muscles),

*multiple myeloma* (type of cancer of the plasma cells in the bone marrow that produces anti-bodies), *temporal arteritis* (inflammation of blood vessels) or *symetic lupus erythematosus* (an auto-immune disease causing the body to attack its own cells and tissue resulting in inflammation and tissue damage).

A relation between the interpreter and the sign can only be designated on a higher level. So, in order to be able to formulate the correct diagnosis House, who is the most important element of the *organism*, and therefore represents the interpreter, has to break forth to a higher level of semiosis. His position in the *organism* (House is the central element but he is positioned outside the structure) as discussed in the second chapter enables him to perform this shift. If two factors correlate then the sign becomes diagnostic in the individual and social sense and becomes a new sign on a higher level of semiosis. Formulating presuppositions and breaking out of the level of the semiosis results in a sign of diagnostic value. This course of interpretation repeats itself until one of the answers proves to be adequate when carried into practice. It is not the end of the interpretative process that results in the correct answer, but the appearance of that answer that results in the end of the interpretative process.

A different model created by Julia Kristeva in her essay "The Speaking Subject" can be applied to further strengthen my assumptions and describe the process of semiosis in the case presented in *House MD*. Kristeva's model includes the following constituents: the Signifier, the Signified, the Object or Situation in which the subject appears, the Unknown, the Signifiable and due to the Signifiable's contradiction with the Situation "a remnant experienced as a body." (214) In the case of *House MD* these constituents can be considered to represent the following elements of the diagnosis. The Signifier and the Signified remain the same as in the Morissian model: the symptoms and the patient's condition. The Situation is the medical setting in which the diagnosis is formulated. The Unknown is the one adequate answer that explains the patient's condition, ungraspable according to Barthes due to the more *text*-like status of the patient, while the Signifiable is the existence of the multitude of possible equally plausible answers that stands in a contradictory relation to the rationally desired outcome of conventional medicine. According to Kristeva the *body* is always present in the equation even when the patient's *text*-like status is dominant thus the *organism*, the group of doctors who took on the form of the subject of their examination take on the role of the *body* in this model. This way the adaptation does not only take place on the level of form but on the level of function as well.

When the correct diagnosis is formulated and it is proved through putting it into practice, the patient can regain her bodily status. The interpretative process was successful, it is finished so there is no need for the textual status of the patient anymore. She is discharged from the hospital, she can return to

her normal life. With reference to Roland Barthes' "From Work to Text" the discharging of the patient is similar to what happens when the reader finishes the book and puts it back to its place on the shelf next to the other books.

Semiotics takes over the place of ethics in the interpretative process in *House MD*. Ethics protects the patient's autonomy (*body*) by regulating the doctors' approach and the actions they take. As opposed to this, semiotics focuses on the solution to the problem – the correct diagnosis of the condition – free from restraints providing a successful approach in medical interpretation. The distinction between these two approaches is addressed in the first episode of the first series during the first differential diagnosis:

Foreman: Isn't treating patients why we became doctors?

House: No, treating illnesses is why we became doctors,  
treating patients is what makes most doctors miserable.

## Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to examine and recognize the unique nature of the interpretative process that can be witnessed in the popular TV-series *House MD*. Combining the methodological approaches of the main trends of detective fiction with post-structuralist reading techniques House and his team proved to be more effective than other doctors.

The first main section established the analogy between the figure of the detective and the diagnostician. These two figures have a concurrent role: interpretation. Pointing out the numerous similarities – both methodological and stylistic – strengthened my statement. The three major trends in the genre of detective fiction (the classic British, the American hard-boiled and the anti-detective model) are all present in *House MD*. House combines the merits of these three methods but he also suffers from the accompanying flaws as well. He uses pure logic from a detached point of view to formulate his assumptions, then filters these assumptions through his own personality raising doubts to solve the mystery at hand in a situation that is fairly different from the conventional set-up of detective fiction.

The second main section examined one side of the interpretative process: the doctors. As it turned out, the members of this interpretative community take on the form of the object of their examination: the body of the patient. They are organized into a structure that bears close resemblance to a living *organism*. The center of this *organism* is House but his position is anything

but conventional. He is positioned outside the structure acting both as a constructive and a destructive force.

The third main section dealt with the other side of the interpretative process: the patient. I justified the possibility of looking at the patient as a *text* rather than a *body*, using Roland Barthes' distinctions between Work and Text. Both of these possible statuses of the patient require a different approach: medical ethics is applied when dealing with a *body* and semiotics is used when interpreting a *text*.

Semiotics takes over the place of ethics in the interpretative process in *House MD*. Ethics protects the patient's autonomy by regulating the doctors' approach and the actions they take while semiotics on the other hand focuses on the solution to the problem – the correct diagnosis of the condition – free from restraints providing an unconventional but successful approach to medical interpretation.

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## **PART 3**



# Foreign Language Learning of Hearing Impaired Children

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## **Abstract**

In my discussion about the foreign language (FL) learning of Hungarian hearing impaired children, I intend to prove that it is not self-evident that verbal Hungarian is their mother tongue just because their nationality is Hungarian, thus it is not necessarily worth teaching a FL through spoken Hungarian. I focus on the question of mother tongue, as teaching a FL is affected by one's native language (Kárpáti 2004:166). I am interested in why it is so difficult to define a hearing impaired child's mother tongue, and why it is so difficult to teach a hearing impaired student his or her native language and / or a FL.

Keywords: hearing impaired, deaf community, foreign language learning, verbal Hungarian, Hungarian sign language, bilingual.

## **Introduction**

Language itself is a complex structure and a natural means of communication. It can be written or oral depending on the context, the message, the channel, the producer and the receiver. When we – and from now on “we” refers to members of the hearing community - learn our first language(s) it happens unconsciously. We do not learn our first language from course books, we learn it through imitation: we try to repeat what our parents, grandparents, siblings, kindergarten teachers etc. have said before, so those utterances or utterance fragments that we have heard from our environment. Then, we

usually learn (a) foreign language(s) as well. We can clearly differentiate between the first, second, third etc. languages and name them L1, L2, L3 etc. Languages are natural parts of our lives, and we consider their use obvious. We only start thinking about their difficulties and importance when we are somehow restricted to use them.

This idea serves as a basis of my present paper, which intends to answer questions on foreign language (FL) learning of Hungarian hearing impaired children. It is very important to define the mother tongue of a hearing impaired child as it is not necessarily verbal Hungarian, and “it is worth teaching a foreign language via one’s native language” (Kárpáti 2004:166). However, it does not mean that it is impossible to learn a FL through the FL itself as there are many successful English language courses held in English. The main problem is that a hearing impaired child is very unlikely to have an advanced language command of verbal Hungarian, the language assumed to be his or her mother tongue.

In verbal Hungarian two out of the four language skills – reading, writing, listening and speaking – are likely to be missing for students with hearing impairment or used at a very basic level. These language skills are the oral ones, i.e. speaking and listening. Thus, teaching speaking and listening in English seems a very difficult or even an impossible task, as these language learners cannot use oral skills in Hungarian either.

In relation to language acquisition, my first intention was to find out why it is so difficult to determine a hearing impaired child’s mother tongue. Second, I was interested why it is so difficult to teach a hearing impaired student through his or her native language. The third question which I meant to answer was whether it is worth teaching verbal English for them or we shall teach English sign language. In my discussion, I intend to prove that it is not self-evident that verbal Hungarian is the mother tongue of a Hungarian hearing impaired learner just because his or her nationality is Hungarian, thus it is not necessarily worth teaching a FL through spoken Hungarian.

I will explain and clarify these seemingly controversial questions on the basis of literature, i.e. provide the theoretical background, then I will present my data collected in an institution for hearing impaired students, and the interview conducted with a teacher of that institution whose classes I was allowed to visit.

In the first part, I will introduce the clinical and cultural perspective of deafness, and put an emphasis on the cultural aspect. Regarding the cultural aspect, I will present the changes in social attitudes towards hearing impaired and the legal measures regulating the rights of the deaf community. I will also describe the issue of bilingualism affecting the lives of deaf people.



In the second part, I will introduce my classroom observations carried out in *Klúg Péter Kindergarten, Primary and Vocational School* in Szeged. I visited three English lessons held by a teacher with whom I conducted an interview as well, and from whom I have learnt a lot. The full version of the interview is available in Appendix 2.

In the following part, I will summarize the results of the questionnaires filled in by 21 hearing impaired students of the Klúg Péter institution. I will discuss the results and via them I intend to present the difficulties of teaching a FL for hearing impaired children. I will focus on the question of mother tongue and the language of instruction.

As a future English teacher, I have decided to examine the present situation of FL learning of Hungarian hearing impaired children, and I intend to introduce the difference between practice and the theory behind it.

## Literature Review

In this section, I will introduce the most important sources I relied on while I was studying the theoretical background of hearing impairment. Regarding the clinical perspective of deafness and the methodology of teaching hearing impaired students, I presented the ideas of Dorottya Kárpáti from 2004. Her article *Az angol mint idegen nyelv tanítása siket nyelvtanulóknak* summarizes the two possible methods of teaching hearing impaired language learners, so the oral and the manual method. I refer to this article when I introduce my classroom observations. Kárpáti also writes about the difference between prelingual and postlingual deaf children that I used during the data analysis. What is more, I refer to Kárpáti as well when I say that teaching a foreign language is the most beneficial through one's native language, which raised my attention to the importance of defining one's mother tongue.

The second source I will highlight is Tove Skutnabb-Kangas's book *Bilingualism or Not: The Education of Minorities* where she introduced her criterion system on which basis one can define his or her native language.

The first criterion is origin or genealogy (Skutnabb-Kangas 1984:14; 18) which implies that one can consider the first learned language as his or her mother tongue. In fact, this is not necessarily one language; a person can be bilingual since birth if, for example, his mother and father speak different languages and the child gets two different language input from the very beginning.

The second criterion according to Skutnabb-Kangas is identification (Skutnabb-Kangas 1984:15; 18). Identification can be internal and external (Skutnabb-Kangas 1984:15-16; 18). If it is internal, then I say that the given language is my mother tongue, but in case of external identification others, i.e.

my environment says what is my mother tongue (Skutnabb-Kangas 1984:18). External identification can cause discrimination as it did (or does) in Hungary related to hearing impaired, as the linguistic and cultural rights of deaf people got under regulation only in 2009.

The third criterion is competence that refers to the language one can speak best (Skutnabb-Kangas 1984:14-15; 18). It is possible that “the language one knows best” (ibid) is not the language he learnt first. This can happen to hearing impaired children when for example the child lost his hearing at the age of four when he had already learnt to speak verbal Hungarian, but in the rest of his life he uses mainly sign language. In this case he may consider sign language to be his mother tongue as he uses it more naturally.

The fourth criterion according to Skutnabb-Kangas is called function (Skutnabb-Kangas 1984:15; 18). She defines this function as “the language one uses most” (Skutnabb-Kangas 1984:18). It can differ from the language known best, from the language with which one identifies himself or the language one learnt first. On this basis it is possible that one considers to have more than one mother tongue.

Skutnabb-Kangas highlights that “[a]ll except the criterion of origin allow for the possibility that the mother tongue may change, even several times during a lifetime” (ibid) if someone changes his or her workplace, moves to another country, gets married to a foreigner etc., so if his or her life circumstances have changed somehow.

The last source I will mention is an article written by Csilla Bartha and Helga Hattyár from which I learnt about the changing attitudes towards the deaf community and their rights in theory and practice. I used this article as a preface to the law on Hungarian sign language introduced in 2009, as it summarizes the legal actions and their (non-)realization in the last circa eight years. This article and the law itself are essential when the FL learning of hearing impaired students is discussed, as their linguistic rights and opportunity are determined by legal measures.

## **I. Clinical and Cultural Perspective of Deafness**

The concept of deafness is complex therefore there are usually two interpretations. First, there is a medical, biological, or so to say clinical perspective, and on the other hand there is a cultural or anthropological one (Bartha and Hattyár 2002:78-79). In the followings, I will describe the two perspectives, and then, I will examine the cultural perspective in detail.

## Clinical Perspective

This perspective explains hearing impairment from the biological side. “In medical sense deafness means the lack of hearing” (Bartha and Hattyár 2002:79). Michael Rodda, Carl Grove and Peter V. Paul explain the degree of hearing impairment on the basis of two variables: hearing loss “measured in decibels (dB)” (Paul 2009:11) and “frequencies for the reception of speech” in hertz (Hz) (Rodda and Grove 1987:7). The most significant speech frequencies are 500, 1000 and 2000 Hz (*ibid*; Paul 2009:12). An example of calculating one’s hearing impairment is provided by Peter V. Paul:

### Right ear

|                       |     |      |      |
|-----------------------|-----|------|------|
| <i>Frequency (Hz)</i> | 500 | 1000 | 2000 |
| <i>Decibels</i>       | 70  | 80   | 90   |

### Left ear

|                       |     |      |      |
|-----------------------|-----|------|------|
| <i>Frequency (Hz)</i> | 500 | 1000 | 2000 |
| <i>Decibels</i>       | 40  | 50   | 60   |

(Paul 2009:12)

The average of hearing impairment is the average of 70+80+90 for the right ear, and the average of 40+50+60 for the left ear (*ibid*). On this basis “the average across the speech frequencies ... is 80 dB for the right ear” and “50 dB for the left ear” (*ibid*). “In this case, the left ear is the better ear” (*ibid*).

By knowing the average value of hearing loss, we can make categories “that correspond to degrees of hearing impairment” (*ibid*). Peter V. Paul has come up with his own classification (slight, mild, marked/moderate, extreme/profound) (*ibid*), but I have found Rodda and Grove’s categorization more precise:

|                   |              |
|-------------------|--------------|
| Normal            | -10 to 25 dB |
| Mild              | 26 to 40 dB  |
| Moderate          | 41 to 55 dB  |
| Moderately Severe | 56 to 70 dB  |
| Severe            | 71 to 90 dB  |
| Profound          | > 91 dB      |

(Rodda and Grove 1987:8)

In spite of this categorization, Paul attracts our attention to the importance of individual differences. He says that “two individuals with the same degree of hearing impairment (and similar age at onset ...) can turn out to be very different linguistically and psychologically” (Paul 2009:13).

Hearing acuity is significant of course, but the place of hearing loss is also essential. The human ear is divided into three parts: external, middle and inner ear (Figure 1).

The procedure of normal hearing is summarized by Timothy C. Hain, Professor of Neurology, Otolaryngology and Physical Therapy:

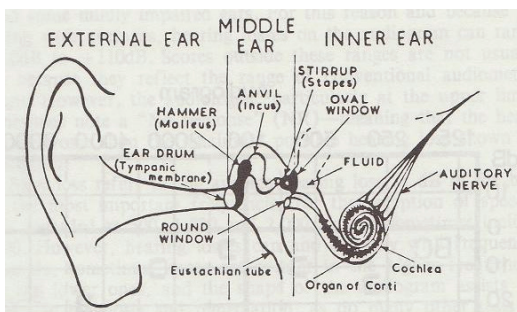


Figure 1.: The structure of the human ear  
(Rodda and Grove 1987: 5)

[s]ound waves are first collected in our outer ear ... pass through our ear canal and cause our eardrum to vibrate. These vibrations are in turn transmitted to our inner ear by the bones of our middle ear.

Our inner ear plays a vital role in the transformation of these mechanical vibrations into electrical impulses, or signals, which can be recognized and decoded by our brain. When the vibrations reach the cochlea through movement of the bones in the middle ear, the fluid within it begins to move, resulting in back and forth motion of tiny hairs (sensory receptors) lining the cochlea. This motion results in the hair cells sending a signal along the auditory nerve to the brain. Our brain receives these impulses in its hearing centers and interprets them as a type of sound (Hain 2010)

In order to gain more insight into the lives of hearing impaired children I interviewed the teacher whose lessons I visited in Klúg Péter Kindergarten, Primary and Vocational School. She briefly summarized the biological background of hearing impairment, so I will quote some parts of the interview here.

[h]earing impairment can occur in two places. One of them is the middle ear which means that the inner ear is unharmed. In this case hearing impairment can be repaired by a hearing aid, and the impaired child is very likely to become a hearing person and learn to speak. This is called conductive hearing impairment and it can be caused by aviator ear.

Another type of hearing impairment is called nerve deafness that occurs in the inner ear. It can be hereditary or caused by meningitis. Hearing is an electric stimulus, but in this case some of the nerves do not function

well or at all, therefore they do not convey the stimulus to the brain. In this case one's hearing is tried to be repaired in a surgical way by placing a cochlear implant. The earlier the implant is given, the bigger chances the deaf child has to be able to hear and learn to speak properly (Appendix 2)

In order to clarify the difference between a hearing aid and a cochlear implant I will briefly describe them. A traditional hearing aid "consists basically of a microphone, an amplifier and an output into a tube connecting with an ear mold that must be properly placed in the ear" and it can only amplify the sound but not restore one's hearing (Rodda and Grove 1987:10). It differs from a cochlear implant which is the following:

a small, complex electronic device that can help to provide a sense of sound to a person who is profoundly deaf or severely hard-of-hearing. The implant consists of an external portion that sits behind the ear and a second portion that is surgically placed under the skin (Cochlear Implants 2010)

Peter V. Paul mentions age at onset as an influential factor in relation to hearing impairment (Paul 2009:13). Age at onset means the "age when the impairment occurs" (ibid) on the basis of which two groups can be distinguished: prelingual and postlingual deaf people (Kárpáti 2004:162). The difference is that in the case of postlingual deafness "hearing loss occurs after language acquisition, so around or after the age of three which implies that the deaf person is able to communicate in his or her mother tongue even though his or her pronunciation gets distorted a little" (ibid). On the other hand, "if a person is born deaf or loses his or her hearing before the age of three, he or she will be able to learn spoken Hungarian by great difficulties and within many years" (ibid).

Age is a relevant factor in the acquisition of one's mother tongue, and it is said to be important in the case of learning a FL. "Many linguists and researchers have been working on the question of critical age period after which the native-like acquisition of a language is really difficult or nearly impossible" (Drávucz and Pintér 2009:1). Critical Period Hypothesis suggests that "there is an age-related point beyond which it becomes difficult or impossible to learn a second language to the same degree as native speakers of that language" (Gass and Selinker 2001:335). For Hungarian non-hearing children it is nearly impossible to become native-like speakers of a FL, especially because they often have difficulties in learning Hungarian fluently and properly.

In what follows, I will describe the cultural or anthropological perspective of hearing impairment, where I will analyse my experiences and the results of the questionnaires filled in by non-hearing learners of English.

## Cultural Perspective

According to the cultural perspective the members of the deaf community belong to a separate cultural group who “sense the world in a mainly visual way, share a common culture ... common behavioural habits and common language” (Bartha and Hattyár 2002:79). “In a sociolinguistic sense the group of hearing impaired people is considered to be a linguistic minority” (Bartha and Hattyár 2002:80). “10% of the Earth’s population is hearing impaired” (Bartha and Hattyár 2002:78), and “in Hungary the deaf community is the third largest linguistic minority” (Bartha and Hattyár 2002:73; Kárpáti 2004:161).

The texts I referred to above were written in 2002 (Bartha and Hattyár) and 2004 (Kárpáti), when the deaf community was said to be a linguistic community. In spite of this consideration, there has been substantial discriminative prejudice towards them. In 2002 Bartha Csilla and Hattyár Helga wrote that “it is not the uniqueness of developing countries that deaf people are regarded as deviant or a group with reduced abilities as they do not follow the norms, value system and language of the leading community (in this case the hearing society)” (Bartha and Hattyár 2002:84). Still in 2002, “according to the laws to operate the deaf community was not considered as a minority but as a challenged group” (Bartha and Hattyár 2002:87).

It was only in December 2009 when a law was introduced about the Hungarian sign language and its use. This law declares that hearing impaired and deaf people are equal members of the society, and acknowledges the “cultural and community-forming power of sign language” (2009. évi CXXV. törv.). The law acknowledges the linguistic status of Hungarian sign language (ibid) which is very important from two points of view. First, it is necessary to understand that sign language is “an individual system that has its own vocabulary, structure and grammar” (Kárpáti 2004:161). “Sign language is not international: every country, every linguistic community has its own sign language” (Kárpáti 2004:162), consequently a hearing impaired Hungarian and a hearing impaired English will not be able to understand each other unless one of them is able to use the other’s sign language.

The second significant perspective is that before the introduction of the law on Hungarian sign language it was a widespread belief that “only sounding or verbal languages can be considered as “normal”, human languages” (Bartha and Hattyár 2002:75). Therefore, “within the society and

in education it was a fact that a deaf person's mother tongue is Hungarian" (Kárpáti 2004:166).

One of the aims of my research is to find out which language deaf children consider their mother tongue as "it is worth teaching a foreign language via one's native language" (ibid). The question arises what if a hearing impaired child considers both spoken Hungarian and sign language his or her mother tongue. In this case I have to introduce the concept of bilingualism.

According to François Grosjean bilingualism means the "knowledge and regular use of two or more languages" (Grosjean 2002:127).

only the sign language-verbal language bilingualism can satisfy a deaf child's needs to communicate with his or her parents as early as possible, to develop his or her cognitive abilities ... to communicate with his or her environment and to adjust to the world of deaf and hearing communities (ibid)

When we consider a Hungarian deaf child bilingual we say that his or her languages are spoken Hungarian and Hungarian sign language. "The significance of the two languages can differ as one child may consider sign language his or her dominant language, others may say their dominant language is spoken Hungarian, and there are some who make balance in the use of the two languages" (ibid).

François Grosjean makes difference between simultaneous and successive acquisition of two languages (Grosjean 1982:169). In the case of simultaneous acquisition the two languages are learnt at the same time (Grosjean 1982:180-181), while in the case of successive acquisition the learning of the second language only starts when the first language acquisition is finished (Grosjean 1982:191). I will introduce it in the analysis of the questionnaires that we can find examples for both types of language acquisition among hearing impaired children, and that it can influence their FL learning.

## II. Research Methodology

I decided to examine foreign language learning of Hungarian hearing impaired children from three different perspectives. First, I intended to observe the students in order to gain a general idea about their language skills and find out the circumstances of their FL learning. Second, I was interested in the students' own views and opinions, thus I asked them to fill in a questionnaire



about their language use. Finally, I wanted to learn about the reasons of these students' learning conditions, therefore I conducted an interview with their English teacher to get an insight into the institution itself, its regulations, teachers, habits and the way the teacher sees her students.

I aimed to find answers to three major questions. First, I examined which language Hungarian hearing impaired children consider their mother tongue: verbal Hungarian or Hungarian sign language. That is why I asked the students to fill in a questionnaire where besides answering questions referring to their language use, they had to name their mother tongue as well. Second, I was interested why it is difficult to teach a hearing impaired child through his or her mother tongue. And third, I intended to find out whether it is worth teaching them verbal English or English sign language.

I tried to find out the students' level of proficiency both in Hungarian and English. That is why I observed three English classes where I could hear them speak both Hungarian and English. Moreover I could observe their communication habits among each other as not only could I gather data in their English classes but I could observe them communicating during breaks.

## **2.1 Classroom Observations**

First, I will introduce the English classes I visited, and the students I observed in the institution of hearing impaired children in Szeged called Klúg Péter Kindergarten, Primary and Vocational School. I had the opportunity to attend three classes in three different groups.

My aim was to get to know their language use among each other during the lessons, and the way they communicate with their teacher. I also expected to discover the language they use in a rather informal situation, namely during the breaks where they are not controlled and supervised by their teacher. My other intention was to find out their language abilities even in Hungarian and in English as well.

### **2.1.1 Group A**

The first group was a seventh grade class where I had the opportunity to observe ten students. In this class the students are between the age of 13 and 15, and they all have been studying English for two years. All students use a hearing aid and two of them have a cochlear implant. They are taught English through the oral-auditory method via spoken Hungarian. "The oral method considers speech, lip-reading, and the development of hearing as the primary means of communication and education within the deaf community" (Bartha



2004:320). In practice it is carried out by slower speech and better articulation from the teacher.

Another possible way of teaching hearing impaired children is the manual method. This method “is based on sign language” (Kárpáti 2004:163). According to the teacher, the problem with this method in Klúg Péter Kindergarten, Primary and Vocation School is that teachers usually can use very basic sign language, so they are not able to use it effectively in education.

In Group A all students can use sign language and as I was observing them in the breaks between classes they were communicating with each other via sign language. All students of this group are capable of speech production however some students are difficult to understand especially when they speak English.

In the beginning of the lesson, all of them were asked to tell four sentences about themselves. The sentences were the following:

- 1) I'm / My name is ...
- 2) I'm ... years old.
- 3) I'm a girl / boy.
- 4) I'm Hungarian. / I'm from Hungary.

These four sentences are considered to be basic and quite easy sentences of English: however, some of them had difficulties in producing them. The words “girl” and “Hungarian” caused great difficulties for them, and hardly could they recall the names of numbers. When they could not pronounce and/or recall a word, they spoke rather “Hunglish” as they started the sentence in English but finished it in Hungarian.

If they were not sure about something, they turned to each other and expected help from their classmates rather than from the teacher. During the break they used sign language among each other, but during the lesson they rather used verbal Hungarian as they tried to adjust to their teacher.

In the second half of the lesson they wrote a short test that focused on mostly vocabulary. Their proficiency level is rather low, but there are some prominent students within the group who could finish the test fast and flawless.

### 2.1.2 Group B

The second group I visited was an eighth grade class where seven students formed the group. In this class students are between the age of 15 and 17, and they have been studying English for three years. They are more seriously impaired than Group A, as they usually do not use hearing in their

communication. Their speech is less understandable, and they rely mostly on lip-reading and sign language. They use sign language among themselves either during breaks or the lesson. One of the students said that he did not use a hearing aid although this is because of his non-hearing identity and not because he would not need it.

The method was the same as in the case of Group A, they study through the oral method however it seemed more difficult for Group B. They had difficulties in lip-reading longer words such as “Hungarian”. When the teacher saw that they did not understand it, she wrote the pronunciation “hángériön” on the blackboard. Students are familiar with phonetic symbols; they usually learn the pronunciation of new vocabulary with the help of them.

In the first part of the lesson they introduced themselves in the same way as Group A did. They are also capable of speech production but it is less understandable than that of Group A. If a student cannot pronounce a word, the teacher helps him by using the finger alphabet (Figure 2). So if she has to support the pronunciation she shows the following elements of the finger alphabet: H - Á - N - G - É - R - I - Ö - N.



Figure 2.: Finger

During this lesson the teacher used the technique of differentiation as two out of seven students are able to use their hearing. Those students who do not use their hearing got a short comic strip in English. They were also given two sheets of paper: the first one contained the Hungarian translation of the comic strip sentence by sentence, and the other included the phonetic transcription of the sentences. The students were asked to match the Hungarian translation and the phonetic transcription with the English sentences of the comic strip.

Those two students who were taught differently had to listen to the story as a start. The teacher read it out loud meanwhile she was showing the pictures of the comic strip. She spoke slowly and articulated more than usual, so the students could understand her. After that, they also had to do the same exercise as the other five learners.

### 2.1.3 Group C

The third group under analysis was a mixed group where hearing impaired and hearing, but mentally challenged students studied together. In this class I observed only the four hearing impaired learners.

The hearing impaired students are between the age of 17 and 18, and they have been studying English for different periods of time. Three of them have been studying it for four years and one of them is a beginner student: he has been studying English only for a year.

The difference among the time intervals does not mean any difference between their proficiency levels. Two students have cochlear implants therefore their speech is quite clear and understandable. The other two students should use their hearing aids but they often refuse to use them. According to the teacher, this is related to their strong hearing impaired identity, and the fact that they consider it shameful. Therefore, these two students' speech is difficult to understand even in Hungarian.

In the beginning of the class, they were asked to introduce themselves; then some parts of the class were also differentiated as two different types of students attended it. They all practiced the names of months: the hearing students had to repeat the words after the teacher, while the hearing impaired ones had to match the written names of months with their phonetic transcriptions.

In the next task, all of the learners were involved. The teacher wrote everything on the blackboard, sometimes even the instructions. Their task was to answer the questions on the blackboard by names of months.

The first question was the following: "When were you born?" The teacher wrote the phonetic transcription under the question and the Hungarian translation next to it.

When were you born? = Mikor születnél?  
 [wen wər ju bɔ:n]

The teacher also wrote the answer to this question on the blackboard. The system is very similar, except that the Hungarian translation is not given.

I was born in \_\_\_\_\_  
 ai wɔz bɔ:n in \_\_\_\_\_

As you can see “born” was given two different phonetic transcriptions [bɔ:n] and [bo:n]. It can be confusing for students learning English as a FL, but in this paper I do not focus on this issue of language teaching.

In addition to the phonetic transcription, there is another aid for students to support pronunciation:

áj voz bón

This transcription helps students to support the pronunciation of phonetic symbols.

Other questions that they were working with are the following: When is Christmas?, When is Easter?, and When was your mum born?. In the last part of the lesson they collected good wishes such as Happy birthday to you, Happy New Year, Merry Christmas and Happy name-day.

Writing on the blackboard and visual supplements were essential parts of all the three classes as hearing impaired children often rely on visual aids (Kárpáti 2004:168). During my classroom observations I was interested in how hearing impaired students understand the verbal Hungarian or English instructions, and how they can produce English utterances. I observed that instructions in verbal Hungarian were not always obvious for them, and they hardly understood if the instruction was English. When they could not pronounce a word correctly, they rather reacted in Hungarian. Moreover, in most cases, they had difficulties in pronouncing English words and making (grammatically) correct English sentences.

My aim was to find out if it is worth teaching them a FL through verbal Hungarian, or it would be more beneficial if the teacher used sign language. What is more, it is also questionable whether teachers should teach verbal English or English sign language. I found that most students had great difficulties in pronouncing English words because they did not get an appropriate pattern they could have been able to imitate. Lip-reading was not always enough, thus because of the lack of success they lost their motivation and gave it up very soon. According to my observation, it would be more

beneficial if they were taught via a language they can use at a sufficient level, but verbal Hungarian does not seem to be the best choice.

## 2.2 Interview

I conducted an interview with the teacher of the students whose classes I could observe. My intention was to learn about the learning environment of students and I was also interested what their teacher thinks about their language use. I found this research method important because I could see the students from another aspect, i.e. from the perspective of their teacher. The full version of the interview can be found in Appendix 2.

The interview was conducted before the classroom observations, thus in the first part of the interview I asked about hearing impairment in general, but I will not imply this section in my paper as I have already discussed both the clinical and the cultural perspective of deafness.

In the second part of the interview I was asking about the teachers of this institution and the methods used during language teaching. I realised that there is only one teacher who can use sign language at a sufficient level for teaching, but she does not use sign language during her lessons. She only holds extracurricular lessons for those who are interested in sign language.

The law on Hungarian sign language introduced in 2009 ensures the right for a hearing impaired student to study different subjects through sign language but only if his or her parents ask for it (2009. évi CXXV. törv.). Otherwise the institution is not required to provide teachers who are able to use sign language at a sufficient level for education. This results in the fact that students are taught through the oral method that uses verbal Hungarian as a language of instruction.

I was asking about the realisation of this method, for example, how pronunciation is taught through verbal Hungarian if the students do not have an advanced language command of the language of instruction. The teacher mentioned how important it is to provide visual aids for them in form of handouts or writing on the blackboard. The teacher also mentioned the finger alphabet that can help supporting the pronunciation for those seriously impaired students who cannot fully rely on lip-reading. The teacher explained me its usage through an example, and I had the chance to observe it in practice during the lesson of Group B.

The teacher is able to use the finger alphabet, but she can use sign language only at a basic level. That is why she cannot use sign language as a means of teaching. Thus, the students communicate with her through spoken Hungarian, but she observed that among each other they mainly use sign language.

I also intended to learn about the linguistic and cognitive abilities of students, and the way they communicate with each other. I found out that there can be major differences between the students when they start their studies at the age of six. They may differ both linguistically and psychologically, and the level of hearing impairment is different as well. I got to know that prelingual and postlingual deaf students study together, thus their general knowledge about the world can differ as well. The lack of knowledge about the world results in “mental retardation” and “reduced speech production” (Appendix 2) as well. Therefore, it is really difficult to satisfy every student’s needs equally.

These students study the material designed for the first school year for three years, thus they finish primary school later, at the age of 16. Regarding the issue of FL teaching, it is not compulsory to study a FL during the primary school; it becomes obligatory only at 9<sup>th</sup> grade. However, starting to teach a FL through verbal Hungarian for 16 or 17-year old students who do not have an advanced language command of the language of instruction is seemingly impossible. It would seem more beneficial teaching them through a language they can use at a more proficient level, i.e. Hungarian sign language. If they can use Hungarian sign language at a higher level than verbal Hungarian, it forecasts that they would use English sign language at a more proficient level than verbal English.

## 2.3 Questionnaire

I intended to examine two factors of language use with the questionnaire. First, I was interested in which language hearing impaired children consider to be their mother tongue: sign language, verbal Hungarian or both. Second, I intended to learn about the students’ language use at home and among their friends. I expected to discover which language they use the most often and at the best level of proficiency. I was also interested in which language they approve of using in different environments.

The students were asked to answer nine questions related to their hearing impairment and language use. In questions 1 to 8, they were asked to choose from two, three or four possible alternatives, and to underline the one they are able to identify with. However, in case of question 7 and 8 where they had to name the language they use the most frequently at home and among their friends 10 of them marked both answers despite the fact that they were asked to underline only one of the alternatives. Question 9 was an open ended question as students were asked how long they have been studying English. In the following part I will introduce the analysis of the questionnaire and the consequences I have drawn from it.

First and foremost, I was interested how long they have been hearing impaired (Figure 3). It turned out that there are both prelingual and postlingual deaf students, so in spite of the fact that the students differ linguistically these two groups study together.

Those who became hearing impaired between age 1 and 3 are on the edge of prelingual and postlingual deafness. They may have been born deaf, but their environment started being suspicious when they did not start talking in time. Therefore, this age between 1 and 3 may mean the discovery of hearing loss and not the actual losing of hearing.

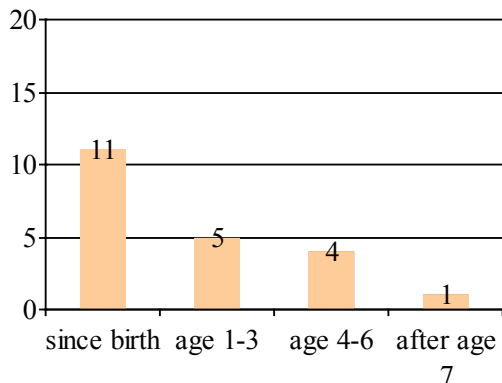


Figure 3: The age of becoming hearing impaired

The student who lost her hearing after the age of 7 met verbal Hungarian before the hearing loss. This means that her speech is completely understandable, although it is slightly distorted. Her English pronunciation is fully understandable as well.

Hearing loss can be hereditary, so one of my goals was to find out if their parents are hearing impaired as well (Figure 4). I found that those two learners who claimed that both their parents were hearing impaired lost their hearing between age 1 and 3. In these cases hearing loss may have been hereditary, but it was recognized later. That is why this age may mean only the discovery of hearing loss. On the other hand, it is possible that two non-hearing parents have a hearing baby, so in this case it is also an option that these two children under analysis lost their hearing between age 1 and 3.

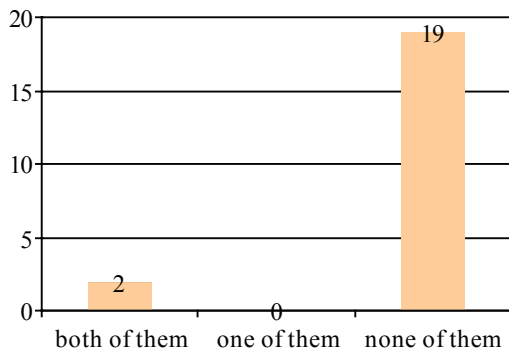


Figure 4: Hearing impairment of parents

In the third question students were asked to give the level of their hearing acuity in decibels for their right and left ear as well. Though I realised it is



irrelevant as the level of hearing acuity can and usually does differ from frequency to frequency. Therefore, I left this question out of my analysis and concentrated on more relevant issues.

The fourth question was whether they use a hearing aid or not. With the exception of an 8<sup>th</sup> grade student, all of them answered yes. This 8<sup>th</sup> grade student does not have a cochlear implant, but the reason for not using his hearing aid was only guessed by his teacher, which I have mentioned before (non-hearing identity).

The fifth question was whether they are able to use sign language, and they all answered yes. I observed that they use sign language among each other, sometimes even during lessons as well. The only group that uses sign language constantly in classes as well is Group B, so the 8<sup>th</sup> grade class.

Question 6, 7 and 8 are the most significant from the point of view of my research. In question 6 I inquired which language they consider their mother tongue (Figure 5). This idea is very important for me as a future teacher of English and for those teachers who are working with non-hearing or hearing impaired children as “it is worth teaching a foreign language via one’s native language” (Kárpáti 2004:166). If we consider our mother tongue a language, it implies that it is the language we use the most often and the most easily. That is why this seems to be the best means of teaching any foreign language to students with hearing impairment.

Question 7 and 8 focuses on language use in different environments. I intended to find out which language Hungarian hearing impaired children use in their two most important environments: at home and among their friends. Figure 6 presents the learners’ language use at home, while Figure 7 presents their language use among their friends, mainly within the school.

7 out of those 8 children who mainly use sign language at home marked sign language as their mother tongue in question 6. 10 out of those 12 students who speak mostly

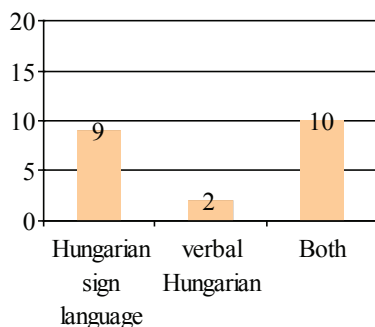


Figure 5: Mother tongue of deaf children

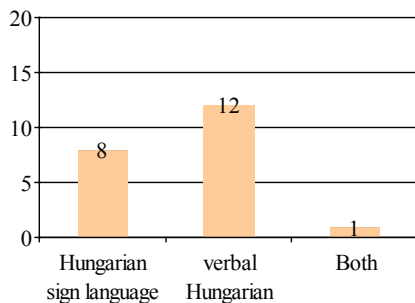


Figure 6: Language use at home



verbal Hungarian at home consider themselves bilinguals according to their answers, and 11 of them have hearing parents. As mentioned before, there were two students, who have hearing impaired parents, but their answers were different to question 6 and 7. One of them considers himself as bilingual and said that he used verbal Hungarian at home. The other student considers sign language his mother tongue and he marked sign language as the most frequently used language at home.

There was only one child who marked both sign language and verbal Hungarian as the most often used language at home. He considers sign language as his mother tongue, but his parents are hearing, therefore marking both answers is completely understandable.

The 8<sup>th</sup> question refers to language use among their friends (Figure 7). 4 out of those 7 students who marked Hungarian sign language in question 8 also consider sign language as their mother tongue. 2 learners consider themselves bilinguals, and there was one child who said that his mother tongue was verbal Hungarian. This student has hearing parents and he lost his hearing between age 4 and 6. Thus he learnt verbal Hungarian before hearing loss, and in spite of the fact he uses sign language at home and among his friends he still considers verbal Hungarian his native language.

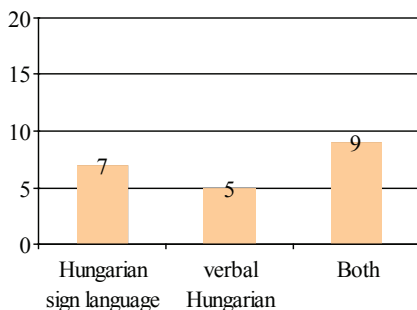


Figure 7: Language use among friends

4 out of those 5 children who chose verbal Hungarian in question 8 consider themselves bilinguals. One of these students has a cochlear implant that facilitates communication in verbal Hungarian. It is not peculiar if a student says that he uses verbal Hungarian among his friends as hearing impaired children have hearing, but sometimes mentally challenged schoolmates as well.

4 out of those 9 students who marked both languages in question 8 said that their native language was Hungarian sign language. One of these children has a cochlear implant as well, and all of their parents are hearing. Other 4 out of these 9 students consider themselves bilinguals, and only one of them said that her mother tongue was verbal Hungarian.

It can be seen from the data above that children come from very different environments, have different linguistic backgrounds, thus they have different educational needs. This is why it is so difficult to teach every student according to his or her needs or through his or her native language.

### III. Data analysis

From Tove Skutnabb-Kangas's criterion system and the analysis of the questionnaires it can be seen that defining hearing impaired students' mother tongue is really difficult, as on the basis of the four criteria we identify more languages.

For example, one of the students is hearing impaired since birth and his parents are hearing. The language learnt first is not obvious, as the parents must have spoken verbal Hungarian but the child could not hear it. When the hearing impairment turned out the parents might have started learning and using sign language but I do not have data related to this question. So, in this case I would say the child is native bilingual as he might have learnt the two languages simultaneously.

Identification is a very personal issue, especially internal identification. I can only rely on his answer to question 6 according to which he considers himself bilingual. On the other hand, external identification is another question. By living in the Hungarian society and reading relevant literature, I concluded that hearing people can be divided into two groups. The first group thinks that Hungarian non-hearing people are part of the Hungarian nation therefore their native language is definitely verbal Hungarian. They may relate sign language to disability and not think of it as a minority language. The other group of hearing people would say that a deaf person's mother tongue is necessarily sign language as they communicate in this language.

From the point of view of language competence I think that this student can use sign language more effectively than verbal Hungarian as he is hearing impaired since birth. This child is seriously hearing impaired, who relies mostly on lip-reading and sign language, and does not really use his hearing. He used sign language during breaks and he communicated via sign language with his mates during the lesson as well.

Function refers to the language used the most often and it can be seen that it depends on the environment. With his hearing parents this student uses verbal Hungarian, but among his friends he prefers sign language as I have already mentioned above.

On the basis of my observations and the analysis of questionnaires I have found four different categories related to hearing impaired children and their possible L1:

- a) *Hearing parents with non-hearing child since birth:* in this case the hearing impaired child is very likely to meet verbal Hungarian first, and if his parents are not considerate and open-minded

enough, he may not get familiar with sign language until he starts primary school. In this way the hearing impaired child will be at a cognitive disadvantage: he will miss learning about his environment and the world in general, as he will not understand the verbal language. He has to learn verbal Hungarian and sign language simultaneously at school around age 6 or 7. Learning sound production is really difficult - if it is possible at all - in this case, therefore learning another language through verbal Hungarian seems impossible.

- b) *Hearing parents with non-hearing child who lost his hearing after meeting verbal Hungarian:* in this case the child has not necessarily learnt to speak Hungarian, but has already got some verbal input from his parents. If he has already learnt to speak then his speech will remain understandable and he will learn a foreign language without much difficulty in verbal Hungarian, as he will not have to rely only on sign language. If the child has not learnt to speak before the hearing loss the situation may be similar to the one in a).
- c) *Non-hearing parents with non-hearing child:* in this case the first language is also the language of the parents which is sign language. Sign language will become the child's first language, i.e. his mother tongue. Verbal Hungarian will be learnt as a second language and most probably will be started to be taught only in primary school. On this basis it should seem obvious that the child will learn a foreign language the most effectively through sign language.
- d) *Non-hearing parents with hearing child:* it could be obvious that if the parents' first language is sign language, then the child's first language will be sign language as well. Although we cannot forget about the child's environment - siblings, grandparents, teachers, media etc. - from where he will most likely to get verbal Hungarian input. In this case the child can learn sign language in order to be able to communicate with his parents, but will learn proper verbal Hungarian and foreign languages as well.

By studying Skutnabb-Kangas's complex definition for mother tongue and the replies of students under analysis, I found the following answers to my research questions.

- 1) Why is it so difficult to determine a hearing impaired child's mother tongue? – It can be difficult to define a hearing person's mother tongue as we can observe this concept according to four criteria. Moreover, the languages rendered to these criteria can alter if one's living circumstances change somehow. Defining one's mother tongue is a personal issue, but teachers have to take into account the needs of each child and establish a learning environment as suitable for all children as possible, even if it requires forming smaller groups and applying new methods.
- 2) Why is it difficult to teach each hearing impaired student on his or her native language? – First of all, because defining one's mother tongue can be difficult as well. The main reason is the difference in the students' needs, and the lack of teachers who are able to use sign language for educational purposes. The law introduced in 2009 ensures the right for all hearing impaired children to receive bilingual education but only if their parents demand it (2009 évi CXXV. törv.). Parents should take into consideration and represent the needs of their children, and they all have to cooperate with the teachers who should also prefer the requirements of their students.
- 3) Is it worth teaching verbal English or shall we teach English sign language? – From the classroom observations it turned out that students mainly rely on visual aids and some of them do not use their hearing at all. Moreover, it is not obligatory to teach them the oral skills, as they are only required to take the written part of the language exam. It depends on the language teacher if he or she finds the development of oral skills important or not. Thus, I would recommend focusing only on written English as hearing impaired students have a lack of verbal language command of Hungarian as well. It seems more efficient to teach them English sign language.

## Conclusion

In my paper I examined the FL learning of hearing impaired children. First, I introduced the two aspects of deafness: the clinical and the cultural

perspective. Then, I put emphasis on the cultural approach and focused on the issue of one's native language if he is hearing impaired.

After discussing the theoretical background, I introduced my research based on classroom observations, an interview and a questionnaire. My first research question was why it is so difficult to define one's mother tongue in case of hearing impairment. I found that there are different criteria on the basis of which one can name more than one language as his or her mother tongue. In the case of non-hearing learners I realised that the question of mother tongue mainly depends on two factors. From the criterion system of Skutnabb-Kangas I found competence (language known at the best proficiency level) and function (language used the most often) (Skutnabb-Kangas 1984:14; 18) as the two major criteria of defining a hearing impaired student's mother tongue.

I have examined why it is so difficult to teach a hearing impaired child via his or her mother tongue. There are substantial differences between the students which make it hard to satisfy their needs equally. In addition, a law in itself does not guarantee that every child will be able to or want to practice his or her rights. Teachers and parents have to work together to ensure the least problematic learning conditions of students.

My third question was whether it is worth teaching them verbal English or English sign language. Written skills seem to be used with more confidence, thus teaching them verbal English where pronunciation is completely different from that of Hungarian is really difficult or even impossible. These students are very unlikely to become able to use verbal English at a sufficient level for communication, as they lack the oral skills in Hungarian as well.

In addition, not all Hungarian hearing impaired children consider verbal Hungarian as their native language. There are some who do so, but those students can use sign language as well. I realised that about 48% of the students consider themselves bilinguals and another 43% say that their mother tongue is sign language. This ratio seems to be significant enough to be taken into account and teach learners via sign language if they find it more convenient than verbal Hungarian. I am aware of the fact that this is an option if the parents ask for it, but I intend to emphasize its importance from the point of view of hearing impaired FL learners.

In order to teach a FL effectively the best would be to form groups according to the learners' needs. I do not intend to state that the oral method is better than the manual one or vice versa, but it is unquestionable that a teacher might use one method more effectively with certain students than with the others. It is not enough to introduce a law; teachers, parents and students should all work together and decide in favour of the learners', demands, even if it requires reorganization or methodological renewal.

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Figure 1:

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Figure 2:

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## APPENDIX 1

### Kérdőív anyanyelvről és nyelvhasználatról

Nem: Fiú / Lány

Kor:

1) Mióta vagy hallássérült?

*születéstől kezdve*

*1-3 év között*

*4-6 év között*

*7 év után*

2) Szüleid hallássérültek?

*igen, mindketten*

*egyikük sem*

*csak az egyikük*

3) Add meg a hallássérülésed mértékét decibelben!

*Bal:*

*Jobb:*

4) Használ-sz-e hallókészüléket?

*Igen*

*Nem*

5) Tudsz jelezni?

*Igen*

*Nem*

6) Mit tartasz az anyanyelvednek?

*magyar jelnyelv*

*hangzó magyar*

*mindkettő*

7) Milyen nyelven kommunikálsz a **leggyakrabban** otthon?

*magyar jelnyelv*

*hangzó magyar*

8) Milyen nyelven kommunikálsz a **leggyakrabban** a barátaiddal?

*magyar jelnyelv*

*hangzó magyar*

9) Mióta tanulsz angolul? (Hónapban vagy évben is megadhatod.)

### Questionnaire related to mother tongue and language use

Gender: Male / Female

Age:

1) How long have you been hearing impaired?

*since birth*

*age 1-3*

*age 4-6*

*after age 7*

2) Are your parents hearing impaired?

*yes, both of them*

*none of them*

*only one of them*



- 3) Please, give the degree of your hearing impairment in decibels!  
*Left ear:* *Right ear:*
- 4) Do you use a hearing aid?  
*Yes* *No*
- 5) Can you use the sign language?  
*Yes* *No*
- 6) Which language do you consider your mother tongue?  
*Hungarian sign language* *verbal Hungarian* *Both*
- 7) Which language do you use **the most frequently** at home?  
*Hungarian sign language* *verbal Hungarian*
- 8) Which language do you use **the most frequently** among your friends?  
*Hungarian sign language* *verbal Hungarian*
- 9) How long have you been learning English? (You can write the number of months or years as well.)

## APPENDIX 2

### Interjú egy az intézményben tanító angol tanárral

Az interjú 2010. szeptember 28-án készült, még az óralátogatásaim előtt.

*Pintér Petra Orsolya (PPO):* Tudnál nekem mondani pár szót a hallássérülésről általában?

*Interjúalany (I):* Persze. Mennyire ismered a fül felépítését?

*PPO:* Csak nagyvonalakban.

*I:* Azt kell tudni róla, hogy a fül három fő részből áll. A külső, a közép és a belsőfülből. A középfülben helyezkednek el a hallócsontok, a belső fülben pedig a csiga és mindenféle idegecskék. A hallássérülés tulajdonképpen két helyen következhet be. Az egyik a középfül, ami azt jelenti, hogy a belső fül teljesen ép, tehát ebben az esetben a hallás egy hallókészülék segítségével korrigálható, olyannyira, hogy a gyerek nagy valószínűség szerint halló lesz és megtanul beszélni. Ez az úgynevezett vezetékes hallássérülés, amit okozhat például egy középfülgyulladás. A másik típus az úgynevezett idegi hallássérülés, ami a belső fülben következik be. Ez lehet örökletes, vagy okozhatja agyhártyagyulladás is. A hallás egy elektromos inger, de ebben az esetben az idegek egy része nem funkcionál megfelelően vagy egyáltalán nem működik és nem továbbítja az ingert az agynak. Ilyenkor műtéti úton próbálják meg orvosolni a hallássérülést, egy úgynevezett cochleáris implantátummal. Minél hamarabb kapja meg a gyerek az implantátumot, annál nagyobb esélye lesz megtanulni beszélni.

*PPO:* Mióta foglalkozol hallássérült gyerekekkel?

*I:* Először gyógypedagógiát végeztem, így '91-ben mint nevelőtanár kerültem ide. Angolt csak három éve tanítok.

*PPO:* Tanítottál halló gyerekeket is?

*I:* Nem.

*PPO:* Orális vagy manuális módszert alkalmazol a tanítás során?

*I:* Mivel nem tudok jelezni, csak alap szinten, így én az orális-auditív módszert alkalmazom. Ez azt jelenti, hogy a hangzó magyart használom az órákon.

*PPO:* Más tanárok tudnak jelezni?

*I:* Nem igazán. Én egy kollégámról tudom, hogy jól jelel, de az órái során ő sem alkalmazza a jelezést. Csak délutáni különfoglalkozást tart azoknak a gyerekeknek, akik érdeklődnek a jelezés iránt. Bár az is igaz, hogy a tanulók úgyis megtanulnak egymástól jelezni, akár itt az iskolában, akár a kollégiumban.

*PPO:* Ezek szerint a gyerekek tanóra keretében nem tanulnak jelezni?

*I:* Nem, csak délutáni fakultáció van azok számára, akiket érdekel.

*PPO:* Ha nem jelezsz, akkor hogyan magyarázol a tanulóidnak?

*I:* Beszélek és rengeteget írok. Számukra nagyon fontos, hogy lássák maguk előtt leírva a szavakat, mondatokat. Vannak olyan tanárok, akik csak az írásra koncentrálnak, én viszont fontosnak tartom, hogy próbálkozzanak a beszédprodukcióval is.

*PPO:* És hogyan tanítod meg nekik a kiejtést?

*I:* Ismerik a fonetikai jeleket, azokat még az abszolút nem hallók is felismerik. Másrészt én az ujj ABC-t használom a kiejtés megsegítésére.

*PPO:* Erre mondanál nekem egy példát?

*I:* Például ha az „I am”-et [i am]-nak ejtik, akkor az ujj ABC segítségével elmutogatom nekik, hogy [áj em] a kiejtés. Ez tulajdonképpen a beszéd helyettesítése. Vizuális és finom-motorikus segítség azok számára, akik nem tudnak szájról olvasni.

*PPO:* Hogyan figyelted meg, a diákok milyen nyelven kommunikálnak egymás között?

*I:* Igazából ez az osztályoktól függ, de általában jelelnek.

*PPO:* Van olyan gyerek, aki úgy kerül ebbe az iskolába, hogy se nem hall, se beszélni, jelelni nem tud?

*I:* Sajnos van. Ebben az esetben visszamaradottabb beszédprodukció jellemző, mivel 6-7 éves korban kezdenek el beszélni tanulni.

*PPO:* Akkor ez tulajdonképpen hatással van a kognitív területekre is, igaz? Úgy értem, ha például az utcán meglát egy kutyát, akkor legközelebb is fel fogja ismerni, de a „kutya” szót nem fogja tudni a négy lábú, szőrös állathoz társítani.

*I:* Ez így van, a késleltetett beszédfejlődés mentális visszamaradottsággal párosul, mivel nincs tudomásuk a világ dolgairól. Nem tanulják meg a mindennapi dolgok nevét, nem tudnak a szavakhoz jelentést társítani.

*PPO:* Inkább pre- vagy posztlingvális siket tanulókkal foglalkoztok?

*I:* Nem igazán vannak posztlingvális siket tanulóink, mert aki mondjuk 5-6 évesen lesz hallássérült, annak vannak már nyelvi emlékei. Ők általában integráltan tanulnak. A legfontosabb, hogy időben fel kell fedezni a hallássérülést, viszont Magyarországon sajnos nincs ingyenes hallásszűrés az újszülötteknek.

*PPO:* Mi a következő lépés, ha egy gyerekről kiderül, hogy hallássérült?

*I:* Ez a halláskárosodás mértékétől függ. Néha elég egy hallókészülék is, de ha cochleáris implantátumra van szükség, akkor az a szülő felelőssége eldönteni, hogy vállalja-e a műtétet vagy sem.

*PPO:* Van olyan tanítványod, aki rendelkezik implantátummal?

*I:* Igen, van, akiknek van, de nem mindegyiküké működik rendesen. Tehát van olyan, akinek megvan az implantja, de mégsem használja, hanem

inkább a szájról olvasásra hagyatkozik. Ezen kívül, ha egy gyerek nem kicsi korban kap implantátumot, akkor nem is lesz képes megfelelő beszédprodukcóra sem.

*PPO:* Zárásképpen mondanál egy pár szót a tanulókról, akiknek angolt tanítasz?

*I:* Három osztályban tanítok angolt, 7., 8. és 10. évfolyamon. 7.-ben és 8.-ban nem kötelező angolt tanulni, ezeken az évfolyamokon csak fakultációként működik. 9.-től viszont már igen. A 7. és 8. osztályokban csak hallássérült diákok vannak, a 10. viszont egy vegyes osztály. Ott a hallássérült tanulók tanulásban akadályozott, enyhe értelmi fogyatékos gyerekekkel tanulnak együtt.

A 7. osztályban lévő tanulók többsége használja a hallását, a 8.-osok közül viszont szinte senki. A 10. osztály ebből a szempontból is vegyes, de majd úgyis meglátod az óralátogatások során.

*PPO:* Rendben, köszönöm szépen, hogy időt szakítottál rám, és köszönöm a beszélgetést!

### **Interview with an English teacher of the institution**

The interview was conducted 28th September 2010 before my classroom observations.

*Pintér Petra Orsolya (PPO):* Can you tell me a few words about hearing impairment in general?

*Interviewee (I):* Yes, sure. How much do you know about the ear's structure?

*PPO:* Not much, only the basics.

*I:* First of all, the human ear has three parts: external, middle and inner ear. The ear bones can be found in the middle ear, while the cochlea and some nerves are in the inner ear. Hearing impairment can occur in two places. One of them is the middle ear which means that the inner ear is unharmed. In this case hearing impairment can be repaired by a hearing aid, and the impaired child is very likely to become a hearing person and learn to speak. This is called conductive hearing impairment and it can be caused by aviator ear.

Another type of hearing impairment is called nerve deafness that occurs in the inner ear. It can be hereditary or caused by meningitis. Hearing is an electric stimulus, but in this case some of the nerves do not function well or at all, therefore they do not convey the stimulus to the brain. In this case one's hearing is tried to be repaired in a surgical way by placing a cochlear implant. The earlier the implant is given, the bigger chances the deaf child has to be able to hear and learn to speak properly.

*PPO:* How long have you been working with hearing impaired children?

*I:* First, I studied special education and started working in this institution as a boarding school teacher in 1991. I have been teaching English only for three years.

*PPO:* Did you teach hearing children as well?

*I:* No, I did not.

*PPO:* Do you use the oral or the manual method in your classes?

*I:* As I can use the sign language only at a very basic level, I use the oral method. It means that I use verbal Hungarian in my lessons.

*PPO:* Are there any other teachers who are able to use the sign language?

*I:* Not really. I know that one of my colleagues can use the sign language but she does not use it during her lessons. She teaches sign language only for those students who are interested in it. Otherwise, students learn sign language from each other either in school or in the dormitory.

*PPO:* So, it means that the students do not learn sign language as a single subject, right?

*I:* No, it is just an out-of-class opportunity for those who are interested.

*PPO:* If you do not use sign language, then how do you explain things to your students?

*I:* I speak and I write a lot. It is very important for them to see the words and sentences written in front of them. There are some teachers who focus only on writing skills, but I find speech production important as well.

*PPO:* And how do you teach the pronunciation?

*I:* They are familiar with phonetic symbols. Even the non-hearing students can recognize them. Otherwise I use the finger alphabet to support pronunciation.

*PPO:* Could you give me an example for that?

*I:* If the student wants to pronounce I am as [i am] then by using the finger alphabet I show him that the correct pronunciation is [áj em]. It is in fact the replacement of speech, and a visual and psychomotor aid for those who cannot lip-read.

*PPO:* What do you think how students communicate between each other?

*I:* It depends on the class, but it is usually sign language.

*PPO:* Is it possible that a child gets into this school but he does not hear, cannot speak, neither able to use the sign language?

*I:* Unfortunately, it is. In this case reduced speech production can be observed as they start to learn how to speak only at the age of 6 or 7.

*PPO:* So, it affects the cognitive areas as well, doesn't it? I mean, if this child is walking in the street and sees a dog, he will recognize it later, but he will not be able to match the word "dog" to the furry animal that has four legs.

*I:* That is right, delayed speech development goes with mental retardation, as these children have no knowledge of the world. They do not learn the names of everyday things, so they cannot match a word with its meaning.

*PPO:* Do you work with rather prelingual or postlingual deaf students?

*I:* There are not really postlingual deaf students because if a child loses his hearing at the age of 5 or 6 he already has some linguistic memories. They usually learn in an integrated school. The most important is to discover the hearing impairment in time, but in Hungary there is no free hearing screening for new-born babies.

*PPO:* What is the next step when it turns out that the child is hearing impaired?

*I:* It depends on the degree of hearing impairment. Sometimes a hearing aid is enough, but if cochlear implant is needed then it is the parent's responsibility to decide whether he wants the surgery for his child or not.

*PPO:* Do you have students who have a cochlear implant?

*I:* Yes, some of them. But not all of theirs work properly, so there are some students who have the implant but do not use it and rely on lip-reading instead. Plus, if the child does not get the implant at an early age he will not be able to learn proper speech production either.

*PPO:* Finally, can you tell me a few words about the students to whom you teach English?

*I:* I teach in three different classes. I teach in 7th, 8th and 10th grade. In 7th and 8th grade English is not compulsory, although it is from 9th grade. There are only hearing impaired students in grade 7 and 8, but the 10th grade class is mixed. Hearing impaired children study together with mentally challenged learners or students with learning disabilities. The majority of students in grade 7 use their hearing, but in 8th grade only very few of them. 10th grade is a mixed group from this point of view as well, but you will see during your visits.

*PPO:* All right, thank you for your time and thank you for the interview as well!

# Conclusion

## What's Your Method?

### On the Structure of Research Papers in Literature

It would be nice to copy out the recipe of an excellent research paper in two paragraphs for everyone to use. Yet there seems to be more to this recipe than a list of ingredients and a list of instructions for blending them. This recipe in question should be more like Harry Potter's *Potions* book in Snape's class: when Harry works very hard to follow instructions of his brand new *Potions* book, he usually fails to achieve anything, but he gets very good at Potions when he finds a well-fingered old book with extra comments jotted over the official recipe. In Potions, the additional advice makes all the difference. Let us say, then, that this recipe here is somewhat dog-eared and marked: it is both an official recipe on aspects to consider when you write an essay on literature, but it is also a note with additional advice, with a checklist of questions to consider before writing.

A research paper in literature has three indispensable ingredients: a text, a problem, and a method. I guess it is no surprise that I list the "text," the reason for the inclusion of the obvious is that for a BA or MA research paper you need a very specific, limited body of primary texts to work with. In other words, you cannot include twelve books of the same author to analyze or six books from different authors to compare: that is simply too much. You need one or two novels or dramas or a handful of poems at most in order to produce an analysis in which you can actually argue for a reading. The second ingredient, the "problem" is equally basic but perhaps more problematic: how to determine what the odious research question of the paper will be. The problem, very simply, should be something that is really a question of interest for you as a person. Also, it should be formulated as a question: preferably a wh-question starting with "why" or "how" with reference to your primary text. However, this grammatical question can only be thought of and formulated if you already have a view of the secondary literature on the text and on the problem you have chosen. Reading the reception, a cluster of secondary texts about your topic helps you understand how you want to explain or approach your problem. You can hear the voices of the critics as they take part in a discussion about the text, and you are invited to join this discussion by taking sides with or by arguing with some of these voices.

At this point a third ingredient, perhaps not so obvious as the former two, is required: you need to think of your method, of a way you approach the problem you are writing about. This approach will also be the reason why you can accept the opinion of some critics you have read but argue with others.

Just to simplify the abstract explanation above, let me give you an example. As happens, you have taken a course on 19th century American women writers and you liked Edith Wharton's *The House of Mirth*, possibly because you have seen the film, too. You are personally interested in the story of the heroine, Lily Bart, and you ask yourself why this charming woman of all others was excluded socially and had to commit suicide at the end of the story. In other words, you are interested in the social dynamics of a NYC elite class at the turn of the century. How can you formulate your problem in more delicate terms? You look at some articles on the subject and notice that different scholars describe the social dynamics you are interested in differently, as if correcting each other's views all the time. There is one who describes the duality of NYC social life in the book: old social values and habits as opposed to new ones Lily Bart is not able or is unwilling to acquire. Another shows that Lily's unwillingness to change her code of behavior is connected to her lonely struggle for independence in a male dominated US social world. Another critic joins in to say that the customs and habits of Lily's set can be described and explained ethnographically. Last but not least, a woman discusses Lily's behavior from the perspective of racial relations in the book. Lily affirms her own racial identity when she rather commits suicide than to marry a Jewish man, Rosedale, but at the same time she loses the very position in the name of which she has snubbed him. As you become interested in this racial aspect of the social dynamics, you decide to analyze racial relations in the book, and this perspective will be your approach, in other words, your methodology. Your research project has come into being at the intersection of text, reception, and method.

The structure of your research paper should bear the mark of the three aspects looked at so far: your text, your problem and its reception, your method, your reading. The first structural ingredient is an explanation about your general interest, the formulation of your problem in the guise of the research question, this will be your introduction. After this the second most important aspect to look through is the reception of the problem at hand, indicating how the diverse secondary readings relate to each other and which ones you like most. This choice will inevitably lead you to the third component to explain: your approach to the problem, your position from which you see the problem. These (second and third) components, reception and method, make up your theoretical background. Then, at long last, you can start your actual analysis of your text, a focused study of a given problem from a specific



perspective in one or two texts. Finally, you can formulate the answer to your research question in your conclusion. You can follow this methodology by discussing your problem in smaller sections, then each section has the above structure. This is more common in the case of longer papers, though. In a longer paper you can write a string of chapters arranged this way, linking them in a separate general introduction and conclusion.